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VOL. LXXII No. 2
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ADVENTURE

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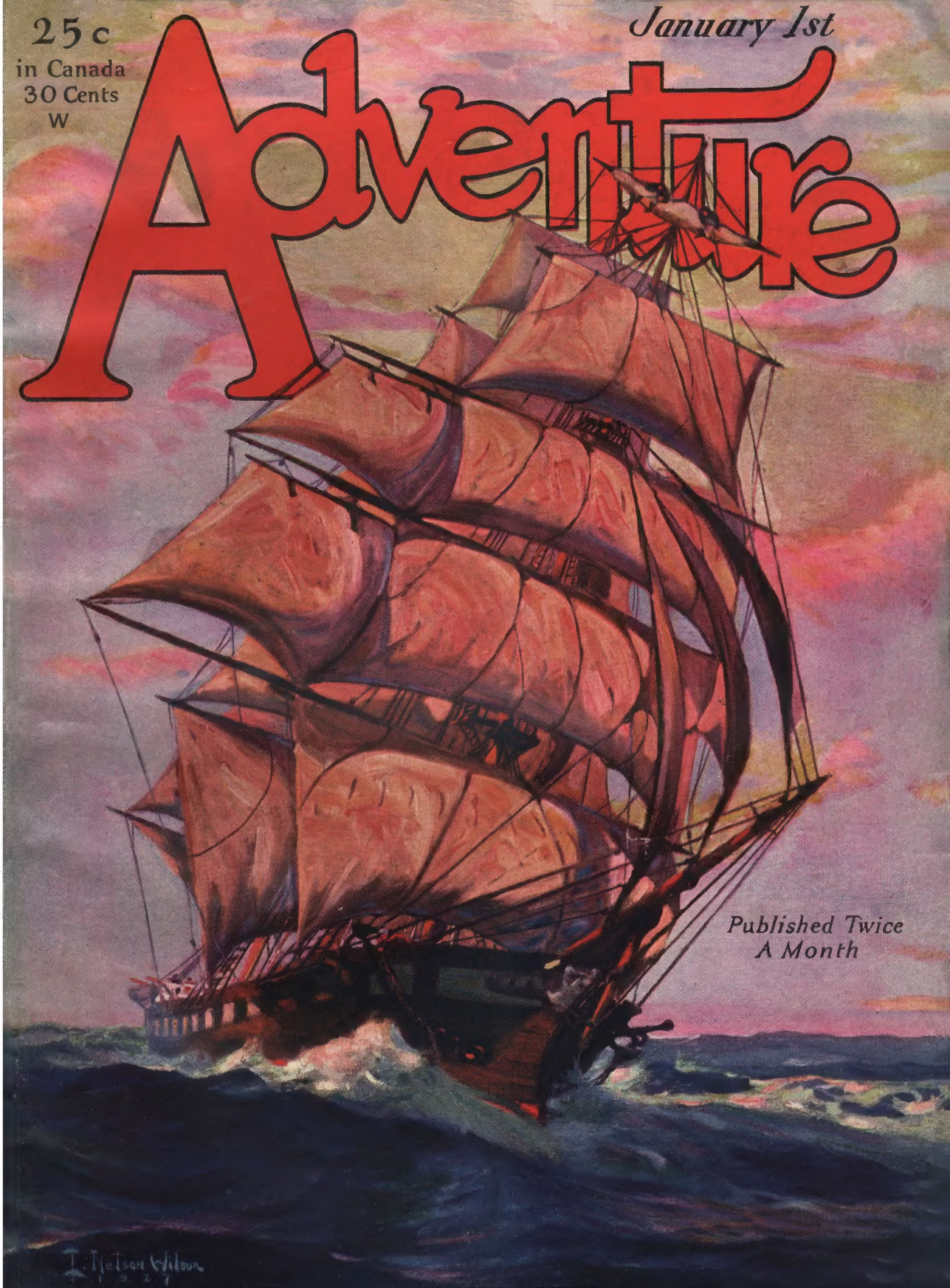
Adventure



Published Twice
A Month

A NOVELETTE of the CRUSADES by Harold Lamb

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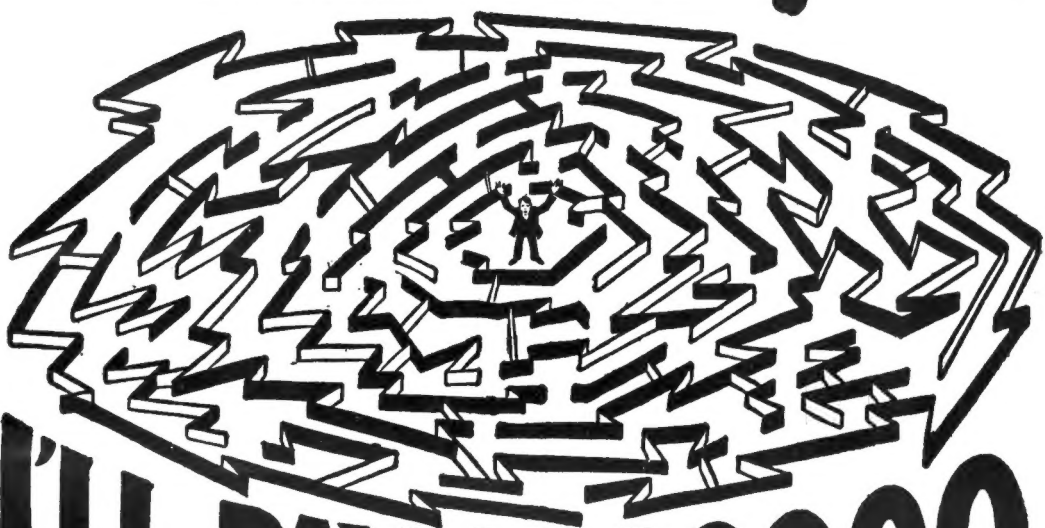

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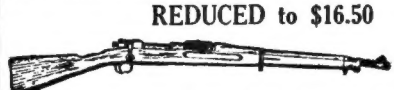

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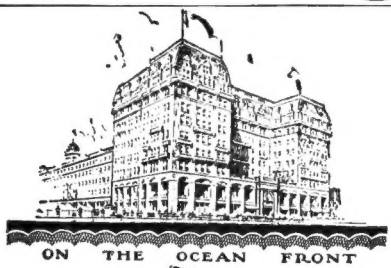

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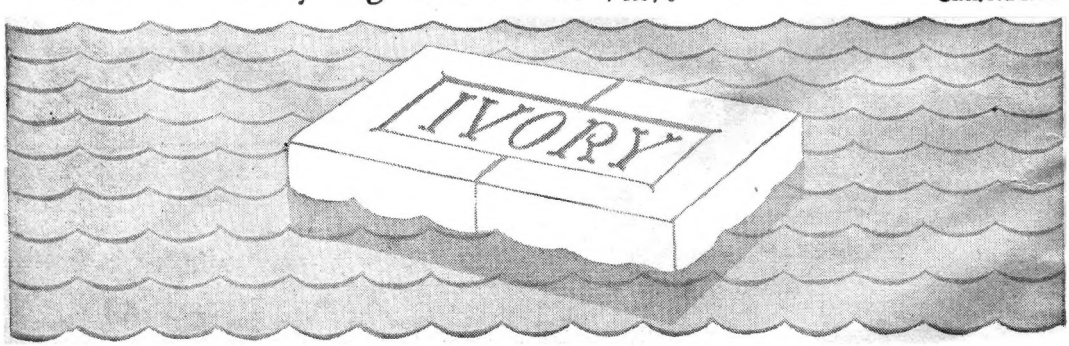

Adventure

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CONTENTS

for January 1st

1931

VOL. LXXVII NO. 2

A. A. Proctor
EDITOR

Skipper's Orders *A Story of the Windjammer Sailors*	BILL ADAMS	2
A Civilized Meal *A Story of Borneo*	L. G. BLOCHMAN	22
Barber Shop Buckaroo (*A Poem*)	CARL ELMO FREEMAN	33
Richard The Lion Heart *A True Novelette of the Crusades*	HAROLD LAMB	34
Booked For Murder *A Story of Crime and Detection*	ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON	68
Bushmen	LAWRENCE G. GREEN	82
King Of The World *A Novel of Jimgrim and Ramsden. Seven Parts—Part IV*	TALBOT MUNDY	84
Black Oak	EDGAR YOUNG	110
The Brightest Bolo *A Story of the Philippines*	CHARLES L. CLIFFORD	114
The Stranger With The Handy Gun	JOHN JOSEPH	132
The Last Born *A Story Of The Wilds*	LEO WALMSLEY	135
Alibi *A Story Of Morocco*	GEORGE E. HOLT	144
Contraband Fur	FRANK DUFRESNE	158
The General *A Story Of Ireland*	R. V. GERY	160

The Camp-Fire 178 Ask Adventure 184 Trail Ahead 192

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A Story of the Sailing Ships

SKIPPER'S ORDERS

By BILL ADAMS

I WAS SITTING in the Old Seamen's Bethel at Portland, Oregon. Though the day was cold and rainy the place was deserted, for, except for one sailing ship and a steamer, both of which were going to sea right away, there were no vessels in port. The ship in which I had come in had been sold to the Chileans and had gone to sea. I was intending to take the evening train to Frisco. There was plenty of shipping in Frisco and I knew that I should have no trouble in finding a berth.

Old man Fletcher who ran the Bethel at that time came from his little office and over to me where I sat by the fire.

"I wonder if you'd do something for me?" he asked.

"Certainly," said I.

"I'd be glad if you'd stay here till I get back," said the old man. "I have to go uptown and may be gone for some time."

"I'll stay as long as you like," I assured him.

A little while after Fletcher had gone I heard a step in the hall. A broad shoul-

dered man with keen gray eyes and a trim pointed gray beard entered the room. A man of about sixty. I guessed at once who he was. Skipper was written all over him. There was command in his eye, in his carriage, in his whole demeanor. Captain Craddock of the sea bound sailing ship.

"Looking for a ship?" asked Captain Craddock.

I shook my head.

"No use to look for a ship here, sir," I replied. "There's only your ship in port and you have your mates already."

"I did have till half an hour ago," he answered. "My second mate was called East and had to leave me. How about taking his berth?"

I knew the man's reputation. He had brought the *Carmac* out to Oregon in well under a hundred days. He was a driver—an out and out cracker-on. One of the sort who never took a sail off a ship till they absolutely had to do so, and who hated it then. I had exchanged a few words with the *Carmac's* mate, who told me that he was a grand skipper to sail with; a disciplinarian, but altogether fair and square. I knew that any officer who sailed under him and left him with a good discharge was safe to get a berth in any ship that he applied for thereafter.

"How long before I should have to be aboard, sir?" I asked, thinking of my promise to Fletcher. I expected him to say right away, but he replied—

"Be aboard at noon sharp."

"I'll be there, sir," said I. He hurried off. I lighted my pipe and settled back to wait for Fletcher's return. It was only a little after ten o'clock.

A little while after Captain Craddock had gone I again heard a step in the hall. I supposed that it was Fletcher; but a shabbily dressed fellow entered the room. He was well built, with powerful hands and shoulders. He was young—not much over twenty. There was something dejected, something almost desperate in his face. He glanced at me and sat down at the opposite side of the fire. Gazing gloomily before him, he twiddled his cap in his fingers. Presently he ceased worrying it and looked up at me.

"Wanting a ship?" he asked.

"No," said I. "I'm all fixed."

"I wish I was," he muttered.

"Not much chance of getting a berth in Oregon just now," said I.

"Not for me, anyway," he replied.

"Not for any one," I answered. "No shipping in and none due for quite a while."

"Shipping or no shipping, small show for me," he muttered.

"What's wrong?" I asked. "Been having some tough luck?"

He nodded. "You heard of the *Glenalder*, didn't you?" he asked.

"Yes," said I, wondering what he was getting at.

It was over a year since the bark *Glenalder* had gone ashore on a fine clear day. I had heard of her wreck, but knew nothing of the details. I had gone to sea before inquiry was held.

"I was her second mate," said the stranger. He jumped up. He strode across the room a few times. He stopped and faced me. "It wasn't my fault!" he exclaimed.

"I didn't suggest that it was," said I. "Whose fault was it?"

"I was on deck in charge when she went on the rocks," he answered. "The skipper was drunk in his cabin. I had warned him that she was getting too close in, but it wasn't any use. He ordered me to hold her to her course, to keep her as she was. What could I do? A second mate can't disobey a skipper, eh?"

"Where was the mate?" I asked.

"The mate was drunk, too," came the reply.

"And you got the blame?" I inquired.

"Aye! Why should I have? It wasn't fair, was it? But a man can't argue with a board of inquiry, eh?" he answered.

"They took your certificate away?" I asked.

"They suspended the skipper's and the mate's indefinitely," he replied. "You know what that means. Took 'em away for good. Why didn't they take mine

away for good while they were at it? They might just as well have."

"What did they do to you?" I asked.

"I had my mate's certificate and they suspended it for a year," he answered. "Old Cottier was at the head of the board. Ever meet old Cottier?"

I shook my head.

"Hard old devil," he continued. "He'd scarcely even listen to my answers. Wouldn't give me any sort of chance. There was one member of the board who wanted to go easy on me. You should have heard Cottier snap back at him. 'Discipline in the service,' he barked. 'We can't have smart officers if we don't discipline 'em!' All through the inquiry he glowered at me like an infernal old hawk. Hardly took his eyes of my face."

HE PAUSED and looked gloomily out of the window. Presently some of the gloom fell from him. A smile came to his lips—an eager, boyish smile. Despite his shabby clothes, his worn shoes, I saw him then as a keen young officer. He swung round, facing me again.

"Lord, I'd like to get even with old Cottier!" he cried. "I gave the old blighter back stare for stare. Except for that one I don't know who the others on the board were, and I don't care. That one was human. 'Captain Cottier,' he said, 'the man who obeys orders is the man for me.' You should have heard Cottier growl then—scornful old swab!"

"What did he say?" I asked.

" 'There are times for obeying orders and there are times for doing the reverse. Just remember that, Captain!' Those were his words. He leaned over his desk for all the world as though he wanted to bite my head off. Lord, how I'd like to get even with him!" came the reply.

On the spur of the moment I asked—"Do you ever drink?"

He flushed under his tan.

"Up to when the *Glenalder* was lost I never did," he replied. "I'd take a nip now and then of course. Never a swine, though." He paused. Then suddenly he asked, "Don't you ever take a drink?"

"I never met a seafaring man that didn't," said I.

"Just so," said he. "I never drank up to when the *Glenalder* was lost. After old Cottier took my certificate away I drank." There was a note of desperate defiance in his voice.

"You thought you might as well get even with Cottier that way?" I suggested.

He smiled in a shamefaced sort of way.

"That's it," he said. "That's it exactly. A fellow may as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, eh?"

"Been going it a bit heavily?" I asked him.

"A bit heavily," he answered; and added gloomily, "But I guess it hasn't got hold of me yet. I haven't had a drink in a week. I wouldn't take a drink if it were offered me. I'm through with it."

"A fellow gets some tough breaks," said I. Every sailor knows how hard a board of inquiry, how merciless some of these old sea captains can be, in judging a man.

"I was planning on going up for my master's certificate in a little while," he continued. "Now where am I? A fat chance they'd ever give me a master's license, with this thing hanging over me."

I said nothing.

"I know how to handle a ship! I'll guarantee that!" he cried. Defiance mingled with despair was in his voice. I had no doubt at all that he spoke the truth.

"If I were you I'd go down to Frisco," I said. "There's plenty of shipping there."

"Frisco," he repeated. "A swell chance for me to get to Frisco."

"Why?" I asked.

"I'm broke," he answered. "Flat as a galley stove. And even if I wasn't, what's the use? What skipper's going to take a poor devil who has had his ticket suspended?"

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said I. "You can have my berth."

"Your berth? What do you mean?" he asked, his tragic eyes on my face.

"There's just one ship in port," said I. "Her skipper wants a second mate. I've agreed to take the berth, but you can have it. He has to have a man right away, and he'll not bother about you having had your ticket suspended. He's in too big a hurry to get away to sea."

"Where do you come in?" he asked.

"That's all right," I answered, "I can go down to Frisco and get a mate's berth. I was going to go down this evening, anyway, if this hadn't turned up. Go ahead and get aboard her right away. Tell him I changed my mind and sent you in my place."

He grasped my hand and thanked me effusively.

"The year was up yesterday," he told me. "I've been working in the logging camps."

I bade him hurry and, thanking me again, he hastened away. But he was barely gone when it occurred to me that he had no money wherewith to hire a boat to take him off to the *Carmac*. I ran after him.

"By gad, I forgot all about that," he exclaimed, when I asked him about it. Taking a dollar from me, he thanked me again. "I'll be back ashore in a few minutes and come and pay up. My name's Menzies," he said.

I went back to wait for Fletcher. It was almost eleven o'clock when he showed up. Meanwhile I had become interested in a book and, having nothing to do till I went to take my train for Frisco, I settled down to finish it.

The clock struck noon. Fletcher came from his office.

"Going out for lunch?" he asked. "You go ahead," said I. "I'll wait till you get back."

Soon after Fletcher left I heard a hurried step in the hall. Menzies coming with the dollar, I supposed. But Captain Craddock strode through the door.

"What kind of a man do you call yourself?" he demanded, his accents stern and contemptuous. Never for a moment having supposed that he would have had any objections to Menzies, I was amazed. "Why did you say you'd ship with me if you didn't intend to do so?" he demanded.

"I thought that Menzies would suit you, sir, or I'd not have sent him off in my place," I answered.

"What the devil are you talking about?" he asked.

"I've seen nothing of the man," he said, when I had told him of Menzies. "A nice trick he's played me. If my tugboat refuses to wait for me now I'll be delayed for Lord knows how long!"

"I'm very sorry, sir," said I.

"Sorry be damned!" he retorted. "I'm presuming that you'll come with me. I hope I'm right."

"I'll come, of course, sir," I said. I followed him toward the hall, having first left an explanatory note on Fletcher's desk.

Some one was coming along the passage. It sounded as though there were two people coming. They seemed to be struggling.

Entering the hall I came face to face with old Fletcher. His hand was on Menzies' arm. Menzies was drunk. He didn't recognize me. Captain Craddock didn't so much as see him.

"I hope that fellow Sullivan has the crew aboard," said Captain Craddock when we came to the street. "When I left the ship he hadn't shown up."

SULLIVAN was the one and only sailors' boarding master in Portland. Sailors' boarding masters were a ruffianly lot, and he was one of the worst. Once he had promised to provide a ship with a crew he would provide it. If there were not enough sailors in his place he would stroll forth and scrape up an acquaintance with any landsman down on his luck. Farmer, laborer, clerk or hobo, it was all one to him. He would steer them down to his place with promises of finding them an easy, well paying job. Once they were there, they were his meat. A few drops from the black bottle,

secretly slipped into a glass of rotten liquor, and they were dumped into his boat and taken aboard ship. It was all one to him what became of them. Just as long as he could collect the sum that some skipper, impatient to get away to sea, had promised to pay him per man, he was content. Not a particle of conscience or of pity in him. And skippers were not given to asking questions, of course.

When we came to the *Carmac* the mate was at her gangway.

"Crew aboard?" asked the skipper. The mate shook his head.

"The minute Sullivan brings them, get that anchor hove in," ordered the skipper, and went to his cabin.

He was scarcely gone when we saw a boat coming off. Sullivan sat in her stern sheets. His crimps were at the oars. Our crew sprawled on the thwarts or lay in the bottom in varying degrees of drunkenness.

In a minute Sullivan and his crimps were lugging the men aboard. Some managed to totter into the forecastle unaided. Some were half dragged, half carried. Several were carried.

"We'll be lucky if they're sober enough for us to heave in the anchor and tow downstream for an hour or two before dark," said the mate.

With the crew all in the forecastle, Sullivan went to the cabin to see about collecting his money.

"How many hands did he bring off, Mister?" called the skipper from the cabin door.

"A full crew, sir," replied the mate. Sullivan took his money and went ashore.

In a few minutes the skipper came on deck.

"Why aren't you getting that anchor in?" he shouted.

Hearing that the hands were too drunk to heave in, he was furious. Never before having been on the West Coast he was unused to the ways of West Coast boarding masters.

In a couple of hours the mate and I went to the forecastle to try to rouse out the hands. Some were sobering up a little. Some lay senseless in their bunks. We ordered the more sober out, and started to heave in; a long job with only part of a crew. By and by I went down to try to get the rest of them out. With the help of a few buckets of water, I brought all but one of them to life, and ordered them up to the forecastle head, to help at the windlass. The last man lay with his face to the bulkhead. A bucket of water had no effect on him.

"Get out, get out!" I ordered, and grasped his arm to drag him to the deck. Next moment I was on the forecastle head.

"Sullivan's brought us off a corpse, sir," I told the mate.

I expected the skipper to blame me and the mate for not having discovered Sullivan's trick before. But he was in too great a hurry to get to sea to waste any time in blaming any one for what was beyond mending. There was nothing to do but bury the dead man and get another to take his place. We could not bury him yet, in sight of the wharves, of course.

"Get that fellow out of the focsle," ordered the skipper. "Then hustle ashore and find a man to replace him."

When the mate and I had carried the dead man into the sail locker I signaled a boat and went ashore. There was only one thing that I could think of. I would go to old Fletcher's place. Possibly he might know where I could find a sailor. Telling the boatman to wait for me, I hurried uptown. The day was dismal. The waterside streets were deserted.

Turning a corner, I came face to face with a policeman with a billy tightly gripped in one hand. His other hand was clamped upon the shoulder of the second mate of the *Glenalder*. My way was instantly clear. If I could prevail upon the policeman to hand Menzies over to me I should have a first rate sailor. When he sobered up, he would assuredly be grateful to me; I should have saved him from going to jail.

I laid my hand on the policeman's arm.

"What d'ye want?" he demanded.

I told him in few words what I wanted. At first he demurred. But as a heavy shower beat down he shoved Menzies toward me.

"Take him along and get him to blazes out o' here," he said.

It was only a couple of blocks to the boat. The mate saw me coming and, before I reached the ship, had the anchor up. I took Menzies to the forecastle and left him there, asleep in the dead man's bunk. With a big stern wheeler fast to her quarter, the *Carmac* started downstream for Astoria and the sea; the crew were still too drunk or too stupefied to know or to care what was happening.

At nightfall we dropped anchor again, to wait for moonrise. When we had brought the dead man from the sail room, wrapped him in canvas and lowered him over the side with weights at his feet, the mate went to his room.

I was sitting alone, smoking on the after hatch, when I became aware of some one coming along the deck from forward.

"What do you want? What are you doing here?" I demanded. A foremast sailor had no business to be on the quarterdeck.

"What ship's this?" came the reply.

"You're a bigger fool than I thought," said I.

Menzies sat down beside me.

"How did I come here?" he asked.

I told him. He sat silent, not a word out of him. He was still there when the cabin door opened and the skipper looked out. Seeing the glow of my pipe, he came to the hatch.

"The minute the moon rises, get that anchor up!" he ordered. "We'll be off Astoria by daylight."

"Very good, sir," said I.

"See that it is very good," he continued. "We've made a bad start. I want you to understand that this sort of thing doesn't go with me. The ship's got to make up lost time, blow high or low."

"Very good, sir," said I again, and he returned to his cabin.

"By gad!" exclaimed Menzies. "Well, what do you know about that? God, but I wish I hadn't spent that dollar!"

"Know about what?" I asked.

"That's Craddock," he replied. "I'd know his voice anywhere. 'The man who obeys orders is the man for me,' he told old Cottier."

Menzies left me, disappeared into the darkness. I sensed his wretchedness.

IN TWO hours the ship was on her way again, the full moon making the wide river almost as light as day. At dawn we were off Astoria, close to the river mouth. There was not a breath of wind. A dense fog was gathering over the unruffled water. The skipper was furious. No ship could get to sea in such weather, of course.

As soon as we had dropped anchor the crew went below to their breakfast. They were surly and voiceless, still half stupefied from Sullivan's liquor.

The skipper and mate had just gone to the saloon for breakfast when the mate came hurrying back to the deck.

"A fine mess!" he exclaimed. "The confounded steward's sick. Signal a boat. The skipper's going to take him ashore."

In a few minutes the skipper came from the cabin, followed by the steward. Menzies had come to the deck and was watching the approaching boat. The shore was barely visible for fog.

The steward climbed down into the boat. On the point of following him the skipper turned to the mate and me.

"I want you gentlemen to understand that this ship goes to sea the instant the weather's fit—the instant." Then he jumped into the boat. But in a moment he called up to the mate, "You come ashore too, Mister," he said. "While I'm taking this man to the hospital you can be finding a new steward."

The boat disappeared into the mist. I called Menzies and told him to keep anchor watch.

"As long as it's foggy see that you keep the bell going regularly," I told him. "Call me if the fog clears, and be sure you call me the minute you see the boat coming back."

Then, not having had a chance to go to my bunk in over twenty-four hours, I went to my room to snatch a little sleep.

At the door of my room I paused to listen to the throb of a steamer's screw. Peering into the fog, I could just make out the vessel that had been at anchor off Portland. She was stopping, held back by the thick weather. I heard her cable rattle out and the splash of her anchor. Steam or sail, none but the most daring master would take his vessel out in such weather.

I woke to the sound of water slapping along the ship's side beneath my port. Astonished that the mate should have got the anchor in and the ship underway without having had me called, angry with Menzies for having failed to waken me, I hurried to the deck. To my amazement the weather was as thick as ever. The shore was completely hidden; but a fresh breeze had risen and was blowing offshore.

I ran up to the poop. There was a man at the wheel, but no sign of the skipper. Far astern I could just hear the sound of the steamer's anchor bell. From the fore part of the ship I heard a clatter of blocks, and the flapping of a sail. I hurried forward, to join the mate.

"Craddock's a cool one," I thought. "Letting his mates take the ship to sea in such weather and staying below while they do so!" The thing was quite beyond me.

When I came forward I found Menzies coolly looking on while the crew hoisted a sail.

"Where's the mate?" I asked him.

"That's good," he shouted to the hands. "Make that fast and get the jib set." Then, turning to me, he said in an utterly matter-of-fact tone, "The mate didn't get back."

"Didn't get back!" I cried. "What the devil are you talking about?"

"The boat wasn't back when the wind came, so I took the ship to sea," he replied. "The skipper said she was to go to sea the instant the weather was fit, didn't he?"

All the dejection was fallen from him now. There was a cheerful grin on his lips.

A stiff squall caught the ship, heeling her far over; the water all round her seething and white with foam. From close to starboard I could hear the roar of breakers. She was crossing the bar already. To turn her, to do anything but go on, was impossible.

"What the devil do you mean?" I shouted to Menzies. "You've cooked your goose for good, this time! We'll be lucky if we get her over the bar!"

"We'll get her over the bar all right," he nonchalantly replied, and added, grinning again, "The skipper said she must get away the instant the weather was fit, didn't he? I thought I'd take him up on it. Old Cottier can't do anything more to me than he's already done. My goose was cooked long ago."

"The skipper didn't give *you* any orders," I shouted. "And even if he had, the weather isn't fit."

"Plenty of wind, isn't there?" he replied, cool as a cucumber.

"You're drunk!" I cried.

He flushed at that. But next moment he smiled and shook his head.

"Sober as a judge," he answered. "The weather suits me first rate. You'd not see Craddock lying at anchor in this breeze, I'll bet. May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, eh? I'm pulling old Cottier's leg to a fare-you-well, don't you think, sir?"

I beckoned him to the lee of the deckhouse, out of the wind a little.

"Can't have smart officers without discipline!" He laughed.

"Dry up, you hopeless fool!" I retorted. "As soon as she's a bit offshore we'll heave her to."

"What good's that, sir?" he asked. "It's going to blow or I miss my guess. It's a fine fair wind and if you heave her

to you'll be wasting it. Take her on and she'll more than make up lost time. The skipper wants her to make up her lost time, doesn't he?"

The fellow was perfectly sober, perfectly serious. It was very evident that he was a first rate seaman.

A thought came to me: The ship was safely over the bar; I had a master's certificate. We could sail her without any trouble. If I hove her to, to wait for the fog to clear and for a fair wind that would enable me to get her back inshore to pick up the skipper and mate, I might quite possibly have to wait for two or three weeks. It was Menzies' funeral, not mine. No blame could attach to me. Simply out of a desire "to pull old Cottier's leg", as he put it, he had deliberately hung himself.

The one thing that troubled me was the crew. They were still more or less under the influence of Sullivan's liquor. Several bottles had come aboard with them. There were some hard looking customers among the men. None had ever seen the skipper, or if they had they had been too drunk to know it. None of them knew anything about the dead man, or that Menzies had been brought off to the ship to replace him. I could pass for skipper without any difficulty. Menzies could pass for mate. But there was no second mate, and there was no steward. The absence of second mate and steward might conceivably lead to complications, might cause suspicions to arise.

IT OCCURRED to me that I had better settle the matter of the steward at once. Among the hands was a young fellow who it was easy to see was no sailor. Some weak faced landsman that Sullivan had shanghaied. I called him aside.

"Take your things to the cabin," I ordered. "You're going to be steward."

He was glad enough to go to the cabin. But as he did so I saw questioning glances pass among the men.

"All right, Mr. Menzies," I said. "Get some more sail on the ship and drive her along."

Reassured, satisfied that I had given up all idea of heaving the ship to, the gloom that had come to his face at my suggestion of doing so left it at once.

Leaving Menzies in charge on deck, I went to the cabin to explain his duties to the steward—a cringing young fellow without a sign of any manliness about him. He shivered as he listened to my directions. His hands shook while he set the breakfast table.

"Brace up!" I ordered. "Pull yourself together unless you want me to turn you over to the mate to make a man out of you."

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir!" he said, his tones servile and entreating. In his efforts to please me he almost ran to and from the table. If there's one thing that a ship's officer detests in a subordinate, that thing is servility. I felt like cuffing the lubber. When presently he paused and in a fawning voice said—

"Captain, if I ain't doing things right, sir, please to tell me, sir," I almost did so. But I controlled myself.

"Less talk," said I, "and a good deal less of the 'sir' stuff."

At that he sensed my contempt. A momentary look of hate came to his face—the cowardly hate that goes hand in hand with servility.

While eating, I pondered on my best course; wondering whether after all I had better not take the ship back. The more I thought about it the more it seemed that that would be the wisest thing for me to do. Having finally decided to do so, I turned to the steward.

"Go tell the second mate that I want him," said I. "Fetch Mr. Menzies here at once."

A puzzled look came to the flunky's face, and instantly I realized my error. Within the space of a few second's I had spoken of Menzies both as mate and as second mate.

At the moment that the steward set his hand upon the cabin door there arose a tramping of feet and a sound of angry

voices from the quarterdeck without. Before he had turned the handle the door burst open. Menzies rushed in, flung the astonished flunky aside, banged the door behind him and set his shoulder against it. From the other side of the door came curses, the hammering of fists and the kicking of heavy boots.

"Better see if there's a pistol anywhere, Mister Mate," said Menzies.

The steward had risen to his feet. I had leaped to mine. At Menzies' words I again saw a puzzled look upon the steward's face.

I ran to the skipper's cabin and in the first drawer that I opened I found a pistol. I knew nothing of firearms; had had no experience with and no need of them. All skippers have firearms, but few ever have occasion to use them. A man can be mate for twenty years and never see one. I grasped it and, without so much as looking to see if it were loaded, ran back to the saloon.

"All right, Mr. Menzies, let them in," said I.

He stepped back; the door flew open. A great ruffianly looking sailor fell over the door coaming and sprawled at my feet. At sight of the pistol the others drew back. Covered by the gun, the big sailor rose.

"Get out!" I ordered.

He backed away. Menzies and I followed him to the quarterdeck.

"Now then, what's all this?" I demanded.

"Ask him, he knows," growled the big sailor, nodding at Menzies.

"They've refused duty, sir," said Menzies. "They say they were shanghaied and won't handle the ship till you turn her back."

"That's right," said the big sailor. "We ain't a-goin' to touch a rope."

The men behind the big sailor were nudging one another and whispering. With his lips screwed up in an evil grin the big man leered at us.

"What's that?" I asked, as if I thought that I had not heard aright; purposely ignoring the fact that the man had omitted to say "sir" in speaking to me, and thus giving him another chance to do so.

"You 'eard, I reckon," said the big sailor.

Before I knew what he was up to Menzies strode from beside me.

"Discipline, you swab!" he exclaimed, and struck the fellow fair on the jaw.

The big sailor staggered, regained himself, and with a bawl of rage flung himself upon Menzies. They went down in a heap, the big man on top.

I snatched a teak wood belaying pin from the rail and struck the big fellow on his head. With a loud grunt he relaxed his grip upon Menzies, and rolled over with his face to the sky. Menzies lay gasping and half strangled on the deck beside him.

My mind was made up now. I must see the thing through. It was altogether against the grain, entirely out of the question, that I should allow myself to be bullied into taking the ship back by a mutinous crew. Raising the pistol, I stepped toward them.

"Get forward!" I ordered. "The ship goes on. I shoot the first man who touches a rope without orders!"

The men slouched away amidships. and stood muttering.

The big sailor came to his senses and climbed to his feet. Menzies was on his knees, about to rise. For an instant the big man looked at me sullenly, meditatively. Then—

"Shoot an' be damned to ye!" he snarled, and rushed at me with his huge fists uplifted.

But Menzies was too quick. Thrusting out a foot he tripped the fellow. As he fell my belaying pin came down upon his head once more.

I handed the pistol to Menzies.

"Take charge of the deck while I lock him up," I said.

Confronted by Menzies, the crew who had started toward us again drew back. Their faces were surly and perplexed. While I dragged their half conscious leader toward a small empty store room

beneath the break of the poop Menzies herded them forward.

HAVING thrust the big fellow into the room and locked the door on him I walked forward to meet Menzies.

"Well, you've made a nice picnic, haven't you?" I said. "We've got a mutinous crew on our hands and I hope you're satisfied."

"I'm not worrying about the crew, and I'm satisfied enough," he replied. He was grinning all over his face. "There's a time to obey and a time not to obey orders," he continued. "I wonder what old Cottier'd think of this, eh?"

"You've cooked your goose this time," said I. "You had a friend in Craddock, and now you've proved yourself a fool to him. A fine dirty trick you've played him!"

The cheerfulness left his face.

"I'd hate to play Craddock a dirty trick," he murmured gloomily. "I didn't look at it that way."

"Well, from my way of thinking you've played him one," I replied. "You'll never see a master's ticket now."

Those last words cut him. He winced. But next moment an obstinate look came to his eyes.

"I meant Craddock no harm!" he exclaimed. "As for a master's ticket, I had no show to ever get one when I first met you. You know it as well as I do. I took the ship to sea to show old Cottier something."

"You ought to be satisfied with that part of it," said I.

A sail flapped above my head. The wind was shifting. I ordered the crew to the braces. They paid no attention.

"D'ye hear me? Get to those braces!" I called.

"We ain't going to touch no gear till you turns Billings loose, sir," said one.

"He'll be turned loose when he promises to behave himself," I told them. "I'm willing to give him and the rest of you a square deal, but there's going to be no more nonsense aboard this ship."

"I ain't meant no harm, sir," called Billings from the open port of his prison. "It was that there bad booze o' Sullivan's in me, sir."

I went to the port.

"Well, is the booze out of you or isn't it?" I asked.

"I'll turn to, sir," he replied.

I unlocked the door. Billings glanced at the pistol in my hand and went straight to the braces.

Having trimmed the sails, I set the hands to work about the deck. They went at their duties tractably, as though there had been no trouble. But in a little while the steward came from the cabin door and started toward the cook's galley. Billings was working close to the galley. Leaving his work, he stepped up to the steward.

"Stooard," I heard him say, "wot's come o' this here ship's second mate?"

When I strode up they were still whispering. The steward hurried into the galley, but the big fellow faced me squarely.

"Well, wot ye goin' to do now?" He grinned.

"Get on with your work!" I ordered, managing with a great effort to control myself, and paying no attention to the fact that in addressing me he had again omitted to say sir.

"Suppose as I don't?" he sneered.

"You'll be put in irons," I replied.

The rest of the crew had left their work and were crowding behind Billings. He turned to them.

"He's a-goin' to lock me up ag'in, boys." He laughed.

"Wot's the idea?" asked one.

"He ain't the capting an' the mate ain't the mate, boys," said Billings.

I heard a sail shake, and knew instinctively that the man at the wheel had left his post. But next moment the sails were all filled again. Menzies had run to the wheel.

I was alone, single handed, faced by a dozen men who had ample reason to refuse to carry out my orders. And yet there was but one thing for me to do. I must compel them to obey. To allow

myself to be bully-ragged by a crew of foremast men was out of the question. There could be no turning the ship back. The chance to turn her back was gone.

I raised the pistol.

"Get on with your work!" I ordered; and to the man who had left the wheel, "Get back to the wheel, you!" They jeered at me.

"Go on an' shoot, Mister," said Billings.

There was a stealthy step on the deck behind me. A hand—the steward's hand—grasped my wrist. The men were instantly upon me. I wrenched my hand free and pulled the trigger. The weapon went off harmlessly. Then it was knocked from my fingers.

A stiff squall caught the ship, heeling her far over. For Menzies to leave her helm was impossible at that moment.

While some of the men tied me at his orders, Billings started to the poop. The ship was easing a little. The worst of the squall was blown by. A great flapping of sails arose and, managing to look toward the poop, I saw that Menzies had left the wheel. He was on the quarterdeck already. I saw him leap at Billings. A ring bolt tripped him and the big sailor kicked him as he fell. Others of the men pounced upon him.

The ship came all aback, and lay in imminent danger of having her masts taken out of her. With his arms pinioned Menzies lay on the deck a little way from me.

"One of you boys git to the wheel," ordered Billings. "The rest o' ye come on an' git some sail off her."

He led them away, running.

From the other side of the deckhouse came the shouting of Billings, urging the men to look alive. The steward had gone to the galley. Menzies and I were alone.

"What the devil do you see to grin about?" I asked him.

In another moment he had rolled himself close beside me, with his back to me.

"Roll over! Get back to back with me, quick! Unlash me as fast as you can!" he whispered.

I rolled myself over, back to back with him. My fingers found the rope that held him bound. To cast it loose was the work of but a few seconds.

Billings came round the corner of the deckhouse as I rose. He saw me at once and raised the pistol. The ship lurched heavily. A shot rang out. Menzies staggered and fell at my feet. Billings leered at me.

" 'Twas meant for ye," he growled. "I'll git ye this time."

The ship took a sharp pitch as he raised the pistol, burying her bows deep. Billings grasped a shroud to steady himself. Pretending to lose my balance, I reeled quickly backward toward the mast, beside which was a capstan bar rack. He guessed my plan, and pulled the trigger. There was no report. Again he pulled the trigger and again there was no report.

"The damned thing weren't full loaded," he growled and, flinging the weapon down, ran at me.

But before he could lay hand on me I had snatched a capstan bar from the rack. He staggered backward with a savage oath as it came down upon his shoulder.

MENZIES was on his feet again, swaying uncertainly, weak from his wound. The rest of the crew came round the deckhouse. I lifted the bar. For a space they hesitated, taken aback by the boldness of my manner; by the sight of Billings prostrate on the deck. Then they were at me. The foremost man went down like a log. They paused again. But Billings had recovered himself. Before I could stop him he had sprung past me and lifted a bar from the rack. We stood face to face, each with a seven-foot bar in his hands.

Water swirled in through the swing ports as the ship rolled over. I slipped, losing my footing on the slippery rolling deck. The bar fell from my hands. Billings laughed. I was at his mercy.

"Jump the lubber an' tie him up!" he ordered of the men behind him.

At that instant one of the men yelled—"Look out, Bill!"

Billings swung about, and was just too late. At the moment that he did so a teak pin desperately gripped in Menzies' right hand came down behind his ear. He went down like an ox.

"Lend me a hand, Mr. Menzies. We'll put him back where he belongs," I said.

Once again Billings was locked in the room beneath the break of the poop. I ordered a man to the wheel. He went. Leaving the rest gathered on the forward deck, I took Menzies to the saloon.

"It's all right," he said. "I'm not much hurt."

I looked at his wound. The bullet had little more than grazed him; a flesh wound the shock of which had been enough to put him out for a little. I washed and bound it. Then together we went to the deck.

The men glowered at us as we walked forward. The wind had steadied and settled to a fine breeze. The ship was sailing at a good speed.

"Take a pull on those braces!" I ordered.

They went to the braces and, having tightened them, went back to their work. The rest of the day passed without incident. I ate my supper alone, waited on by the cowed and trembling steward. I ignored the poor fool. When Menzies had eaten he joined me on the poop. It was more than twelve hours since we had left Astoria. The ship had made close to a hundred and fifty miles already. Except for the man at the wheel there was no one to be seen on the deck. The men were in the forecastle. The wind thrummed in the rigging, the sea foamed alongside. There was no other sound. But presently there arose a shout from Billings, locked in the room beneath the planks on which we stood. Since I had imprisoned him he had made no outcry.

"What are you going to do with that fellow, sir?" asked Menzies.

"Leave him where he is till he's had more than enough of it," said I.

Again there came a bellow from Billings; another, and another. He was calling the crew by name. In the deep dusk I saw some of them come from the forecastle. They stood about as though undecided whether to come aft or not. I went down the ladder to the quarter-deck. Billings' face was framed in the open port.

"Your noise will do you no good," said I.

He answered with a stream of curses. His face disappeared from the port. Immediately there arose a terrific clattering of iron upon iron. He had found a heavy scraping chisel and was pounding it upon the bulkhead. Paying no more attention to him I returned to the poop.

When Menzies went to his room to sleep till midnight Billings was still amusing himself by alternately pounding on the bulkhead and shouting at the top of his voice. Presently Menzies came back to me.

"How long are you going to let that fellow keep up his racket, sir?" he asked.

"He'll soon get tired of it if we take no notice of him," I answered.

Midnight came and still Billings continued his din. Menzies came to take charge of the ship that I might go below. There was a moon. The decks were lighted. When the hands were gathered on the deck beneath us, waiting the word for the wheel and lookout to be relieved, I took from my pocket the pistol that I had fully loaded with ammunition found in the skipper's cabin and, in full view of the men, handed it to Menzies.

I had been asleep for some time when I was wakened by the motion of the ship. She was lying far over. I could plainly hear the increased noise of the sea and the roar of the wind. Billings had ceased his din. He was silent now. In a moment I heard Menzies' whistle. Immediately there rose a tramping of feet and loud shouting. Knowing that he was taking some sail off, confident that all was well, I lay down again. I had hardly done so when a scream reached my ears, followed at once by a wild cry of "Man overboard!"

By the time I reached the deck Menzies had the ship stopped and was getting a boat away. The moon was obscured by heavy clouds. The night was murky. The sea moaned, the wind wailed in the rigging.

In a few seconds the boat was away, with Menzies and three men in her. Gathered about the quarterdeck the hands peered into the gloom beyond the bulwarks.

The boat was gone and I was on the point of starting up the ladder to the poop when I heard Billings' voice.

"What's up? What's goin' on, boys?" he called.

"Man overboard, Billy," answered one of the men.

"Who is it?" asked Billings.

"Pete," came the reply. "He fell from aloft, Billy."

The moon broke through the clouds and shone on Billings' face, framed in the port.

"Capting," he called, "don't leave me 'ere sir, w'ile Pete's a-drowning'!"

"I'd let you out if I could trust you," I replied, and started up the ladder.

"For Gawd's sake, sir, don't leave me 'ere w'ile Pete's a drownin'!" he implored.

The moon went out. Beneath the lantern hung in the rigging to guide the boat back I saw the pallid faces of the crew. There was no laughter now, no discord, no whispering. The terror of the sea was on them. A comrade was drowning.

BILLINGS called beseechingly. The crew looked pleadingly up at me. I entered the chartroom to look at the barometer. It was falling fast. There was a blow coming very soon. Billings was the most powerful man in the ship, worth any three of the others; the sort of man invaluable in heavy weather.

Still undecided, I returned to the quarterdeck. A flicker from the lantern played on the door of Billings' prison. He heard my step and rapped.

" 'Ave a 'eart, sir," he called. "Capting, please to 'ave a bit o' 'eart!"

There were tremors in his voice. No arrogance now.

I unlocked the door. Billings stepped slowly out. Without word or glance to me he walked to the men by the railing. I heard him whisper a question, but could not hear the words. The muttered answer of one of the hands came to me, clear in a wind lull.

"Ain't got it. The feller in the boat's got it."

Too late I realized my folly. I had forgotten to take the pistol from Menzies. Billings chuckled and swung round. For a moment he peered at me through the gloom. Then he strode to the capstan bar rack and lifted out a bar. Next minute his mood changed. He dropped the bar and, with a hoarse laugh, came at me with his bare hands. There was no belaying pin within my reach. He knew it, and moved with portentous deliberation. Two great hands clamped on my throat. My own hands were as good as useless, my beating fists impotent against his ape-like strength. I was down, with Billings over me. Then suddenly one of the men cried:

"The boat's comin', Bill! They've got Pete!"

He relaxed his grip a little at that.

I tried to shout, to warn Menzies. My voice was a wheeze. Billings was kneeling on me. Ignoring my attempted outcry, he glanced round at the men. With a last desperate effort I wrenched myself from beneath him and leaped up. He was instantly at me. I backed, with his great paws at my throat. My foot caught in the frame of the winch between the mast and hatch. I stumbled. He was on me, his huge body bearing me down. With my foot caught in the winch frame I fell. A terrible pain wracked me. My senses reeled; darkness closed over me.

I came to my senses on my back on the deck. My arms were bound. There was a gag in my mouth. My leg was helpless, broken.

The men were at the railing, looking down to the sea. I saw them plainly by the lantern's light. I saw the three men

who had been rowing the boat climb back aboard, followed by the dripping figure of the man whom they had rescued. Then I heard Menzies' voice from the boat.

"Where's the captain?"

"He's just went to the chartroom, sir," answered Billings.

I heard Menzies' calm reply.

"Very well. Ask him to come to the railing. I'll wait here till he comes."

I knew that he suspected something.

Pretending to take Menzies' message, one of the men left the rail and went to the chartroom. Billings and some of the others withdrew from the railing and, out of sight of Menzies, whispered together. Then Billings came to me. Kneeling beside me, he took the knife from his belt. With the point of the blade at my throat he took the gag from my lips.

"Call yer mate," he growled. "Ye've got two jiffs to make up yer mind in."

"Come aboard, Mister Menzies," I called.

"I'll come when I can see you, sir," came the immediate answer.

Billings beckoned some of the men to him. As they lifted me he cut the lashings that bound my arms. They carried me to the railing. With his knife point pricking my back, the brute whispered—

"Order 'im aboard!"

Held by stooping men whom he could not see, I looked down to Menzies. Pistol in hand, he looked up into my face.

"Come aboard, Mister Menzies," I said.

He lifted the pistol, aimed at the lantern hanging in the rigging and pulled the trigger. The glass shattered and the flame winked out.

"Watch fer 'im boys an' git 'im w'en 'e comes over the rail!" cried Billings.

"Not me," came a determined answer. "I ain't wantin' to git shot."

"Nor me," grumbled another. "You git 'im yerself, Bill."

Then in the darkness I heard Billings chuckle. Next moment a falling rope splashed into the water beneath me, between the ship and the gloom hidden boat.

"They've cut the boat adrift, sir," called Menzies.

"Drift an' be damned to ye," mocked Billings. A murmur of expostulation rose from some of the others, but he cursed them to silence. For a few moments he peered down into the gloom, kneeling on the pin rail at my side. Then, "He's drifted away, boys," he said. "Go git a bit o' sail off her afore it gits to blowin' too hard. Look alive there!"

The men moved away. Ignoring me now that I was helpless, Billings moved away too. I heard him chuckling as he went toward the saloon.

"Capting Billings," he muttered to himself. "Capting Billings—that sounds good, that does!"

"Menzies!" I shouted into the darkness.

There was no answer. Again I shouted, and again there was no answer. But suddenly something wet, something dripping, brushed my shoulder. A low voice said in my ear—"Go on calling me so that they don't suspect." Menzies had swum to the ship and climbed aboard. "Where's Billings?" he whispered.

"Gone to the cabin," I replied.

Menzies was instantly gone.

"Menzies!" I shouted. "Menzies!" Then I took a belaying pin from the rail and dragged myself on all fours toward the cabin. It was only some thirty feet, but to me, tortured by my leg, it seemed that many miles.

I opened the cabin door, dragged myself within and closed it behind me. The saloon door at the other end of the alleyway was open. In the doorway, with his back to me, stood Menzies, pistol in hand. Facing him at the opposite side of the saloon was Billings. Gripped in his great hands, held out before him as a shield, was the terrified steward.

"Shoot, w'y don't ye?" I heard Billings say.

I grasped the hand rail, raised myself to my feet, crawled to Menzies and touched his arm. He glanced back.

"Take the pistol, sir," he said. "Give me that pin and I'll teach the devil a lesson."

Billings paled.

"All hands get aft here! To the cabin!" he bellowed.

With his back to the bulkhead he held the screaming steward before him. We warily approached from opposite sides.

The ship lurched heavily, throwing my weight upon my broken leg; and at that moment the door from the quarterdeck burst open. I heard a laugh from Billings as the men rushed in. Then I was down. A hand, I could not tell whose hand, snatched the pistol from me. There was a sharp report. There was a trampling of feet on and about me. A door slammed and I lost consciousness.

I came to with Menzies bending above me. The hands were gone.

"Where's Billings?" I asked.

"He'll give us no more trouble," came the answer.

He lifted me and helped me to a chair. In the corner of the saloon I saw Billings, face down on the deck. In another corner the steward crouched, whimpering.

"It was you took the pistol from me?" I asked.

Menzies nodded.

"I'll get that fellow out of here now," he said, and went out to the quarterdeck. I heard his whistle and immediately afterward the door opened and he came in again with two of the crew.

"Take that lubber out of here," he ordered.

The two hands lifted Billings and carried him away. It was plain to see that with him dead they were cowed and would give no more trouble.

THE SHIP was lurching heavily. I could hear the roar of the rising wind, the crash of the sea as it swept inboard and foamed across the decks. Menzies said:

"I'll have to leave you awhile. I'll be back as soon as I can."

He went out to the deck again. The steward slunk from the saloon.

"He'd have made a fine skipper," I thought. "And now he's ruined himself just out of sheer folly. His first mishap might have been overlooked. This madness never will be."

When presently the door opened and Menzies came back, followed by two of the hands again, dawn was beginning to filter through the ports. I saw a dark sky, and under it a great sea running.

Menzies was for having the two men carry me to the skipper's cabin, but I asked him to have me taken up to the chartroom whence I should be able to see what went on. When I was stretched out on the chartroom settee he set my leg as best he could. After that was done the steward brought my breakfast to me. The voices of the crew came to me while I ate, and Menzies' voice giving them brisk orders. In a little while he came back.

"Well, you've got a captaincy for a time at any rate," I said.

He winced at my words, and for a minute or two made no answer. Leaning in the doorway he looked out across the foaming seas. The ship was heeling to a great press of sail, flying through the water with every sheet taut. He turned to me after that brief silence. His expression was eager, determined.

"Yes," said he, "I've a captaincy now—and now by heavens I'll sail her! I'll prove to Craddock that I know my business. What Cottier may think now matters less than that."

The steward called up that his breakfast was ready. Left to myself I gazed over the sea astern. Low on the horizon I saw a dim trail of smoke. A steamer was coming up on us. In a little while I was able to make out her funnel. Soon I had a glimpse of her upper works. She was gaining on us fast.

"There's a steamer coming up on us," I called down to Menzies.

He was up the companion ladder in a bound.

"I'll show the confounded steam kettle!" he exclaimed.

Shouting to the hands, he ran down to the deck. Blocks whined, sails flapped as he piled more sail on the already straining ship. With sprays flying clear

over her, she ran, her lee rail dipping to the sea. In a few minutes he was back, to scan the steamer through the telescope.

"She's not gaining on us now," he said.

"You're carrying too much sail," I warned him. "You'll rip the masts out of her."

"Think so?" He laughed, and added, "They're putting her along for all she's worth. They don't like to be left by a windjammer."

By noon the steamer was out of sight. Clouds were gathering thick. The sun was hidden. The sea was become a cold gray. The wind was freshing steadily. But Menzies kept full sail on the ship. Throughout the afternoon he drove her through the rising seas. Dusk fell, and still he drove her. But shortly after nightfall, with no star in the sky, with an ominous blackness all about, with the roar of wind and sea coming ever louder from the night astern, he called the hands and took a little sail off her. He came back to the chartroom then, and lay down on the bare planks beneath me.

"Call me at once if you see the steamer's lights," he said.

He fell asleep as nonchalantly as though the ship were becalmed in the tropics instead of carrying a heavy press of sail in weather that gave indications of blowing up a gale very shortly.

For some two hours I watched for the steamer's lights and listened intently to the weather. Then Menzies wakened and went out to the deck, shutting the door behind him. In a few moments I was asleep.

A little after dawn I was wakened by the motion of the ship. She was lying over at a terrific slope. Even with the charthouse door shut I could hear the sprays that battered over her forward. Raising myself, I looked out of one of the ports that gave a view of the deck. At that moment she pitched dizzily. Bracing myself lest I be flung from the settee, I watched her as she rose again. A sea smashed against her bow. A sheet of spray smothered her forecastle head, lashed into the belly of her drum-tight foresail and, flying high above the fore yard, drenched the weather clew of the topsail above it.

"He'll have to take some more sail off her," I thought. The wind was stronger than it had been when I went to sleep. The sky was darker than it had been upon the previous evening.

The door opened and Menzies looked in.

"Time to take some more sail off her, isn't it?" I asked.

His face was drawn with tiredness.

"More sail off her?" he replied. "I haven't taken any off her yet. I put everything back on her long ago."

"You're carrying full sail in this?" I exclaimed. "Man, you're crazy!"

"Look at that if you think so," he retorted, and pointed through a port that looked astern. "She stole up on us in the night and I don't seem able to shake her."

Looking astern, I saw the steamer wallowing in our wake.

All that day Menzies drove the *Carmac* with every inch of her canvas set. All day the steamer held her own, neither gaining nor losing. At noon he had the steward take his dinner to the poop. I begged him in vain to take sail off the ship and get a little rest.

"What does it matter if the steamer overhauls us?" I asked.

"It matters to me," he replied.

"You'll rip the sticks out of her and smash her up," said I.

"She's used to Craddock's driving," he answered. "Now she can get used to mine."

"You can't stand this sort of thing much longer, even if the ship can," I said. "You've got to have some rest."

"D'ye suppose that Craddock would let that kettle pass him?" he retorted. "There'll be plenty of rest for me at the end of the voyage. They'll take my ticket away for good and all. But I'm skipper now, and while I'm skipper no kettle's going to pass her if I can help it. I wonder what old Cottier would say to this, eh?"

Night came and, instead of shortening sail, Menzies drove her on into the pitchy dark with every inch of canvas set. She flew like a hunted stag, the big seas roaring in over her weather railing and thundering to and fro across her rolling decks.

A LITTLE after midnight Menzies came to the chart-room. By the light of the lamp his white face looked like that of a ghost. But his eyes were sparky, his jaws tight.

"It's coming in a bit foggy," he said. "I can't see the steamer's lights any longer."

"She's slowed down for the fog," said I. "You'd better do the same."

"Let her slow," he retorted. "D'ye suppose Craddock would slow with the whole ocean before him?" In vain I begged him to shorten sail and to get some sleep. "I'll get sleep enough at the end of the voyage," he answered.

When day came again everything was hidden in dense fog. The man at the wheel, the rigging, the decks, the sea, all were invisible. The wind raged. The sea thundered. The steward took Menzies' breakfast to the poop, but, slipping as he left the chart room, fell; so that all the food was swept over the side.

"Never mind. Bring me a couple of ship biscuits," shouted Menzies.

All day he stayed on deck and drove the ship. All day he never left her deck for an instant. Wan faced, but with determined eyes and hard set jaw, he drove her on into another howling night. Just after nightfall he looked in on me.

"May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," he shouted. He added, smiling despite his weariness, "And this is a damned fine sheep!"

Before I could speak he banged the door and was gone. Wondering whether it would be he or the madly driven ship that would go to pieces first, I presently fell asleep.

When I wakened the ship was erect, and I knew at once that the wind had fallen. The door opened and Menzies came in. He swayed as he walked. He was as a man in a dream, almost asleep upon his feet.

"I'm going below for a little, now," he said. "The wind left us an hour ago."

Dawn came. There was no wind. The ship was motionless, erect on fog hidden, unruffled water.

Shortly after dawn the mist thinned a little. I saw the cook leave his room and go to the galley. I saw some of the crew come from the forecastle. As though looking for Menzies, they glanced up to the poop. When they all started toward the poop I reached for the drawer into which he had put the pistol. I suspected more trouble was afoot. But the hands came aft and up the poop ladder hesitantly, each seeming to want some other to lead the way.

"What is it? What do you want?" I asked, when the men stood in a voiceless semicircle about the charthouse door.

"It's about Billings, sir, please," said one.

"What about Billings? He's dead, isn't he?" I asked.

"Yes, sir. That's it, sir," came the hesitant reply.

"Well, what about him then?" I asked.

"He's dead but he ain't buried, sir," said the spokesman. "A dead man's bad luck in a ship."

"I'm not going to have Mr. Menzies wakened just to bury Billings," I said. "If you're so anxious to have him buried you can go ahead and bury him."

The hands turned and hurried forward. I watched them bring Billings from the sail room and wrap an old piece of canvas about him. The fog was dispersing, but still there was no wind.

With a weight at his feet, Billings was all hidden in canvas save for his face, when the rising sun broke through the fog and shone upon the *Carmac* and the blue sea about her. One of the men grasped the arm of another and pointed over the water. Following their gaze, I saw the steamer lying a short distance away on

the beam. I recognized her at once as the vessel that had been in Portland and Astoria. One of her boats was approaching us. In the boat's stern sat Captain Craddock.

Gathered at the rail with Billings lying face upward on the planks behind them, the men watched the approaching boat. I could see Craddock's wrath, could sense it even before the boat came alongside. The men fell back as he climbed over the railing. He jumped to the deck and glanced about, forward, aft, everywhere—seeking me. Not seeing me, he strode toward the poop. Suddenly aware of Billings at his feet, he stopped.

"What's this?" he demanded. "How did this fellow die?"

Each waiting for some other to speak, the men looked guiltily about.

I dragged myself up, on to my good leg. I hopped out to the poop just as Captain Craddock ran up the ladder from the quarterdeck.

We faced each other. My leg was paining me horribly. I gripped the hand rail to steady myself.

Craddock's eyes were ablaze with anger. He tried to speak and at first only stammered incoherently.

"Running off with the ship! By gad, I'll fix you!" His face was livid. His fists were clenched, his elbows drawn back. "Had to leave my mate ashore. Couldn't wait for him or I'd have lost you! By gad, I'll fix you! Say something! Speak, damn you! Running off with the ship! By gad, where'd you get it—where'd you get your damned drink? You were sober enough when I hired you!"

The ship rolled over, throwing my weight upon my injured leg. I felt myself going faint. I sat down—collapsed on the skylight adjoining the chartroom.

Craddock saw that I was injured then. The fury in his face gave way in part to a look of consternation. He glanced down at Billings on the deck below.

"What the devil's been doing here?" he muttered.

I sat looking up at him while he stood staring down at me. There wasn't a sound; not a voice, not a footfall; no wash of water.

A breath of wind came into the idle sails, filling them, lifting them with a quick slap of sheets and jerk of parrels, gliding the ship forward with a low murmur of water about her. Immediately the wind died again. Silence was back.

An unsteady step sounded on the companion ladder that led up from the saloon to the chart room.

His eyes heavy with sleep, his face haggard with weariness, Menzies stumbled from the chart room. Without seeing Craddock or me, or the steamer; aware only that the wind was rising again, he walked like a man in a dream to the break of the poop and set his hands upon the taffrail.

"Take a pull on those weather braces," ordered Menzies, looking down at the crew.

Craddock's lips fell open. His fists unclenched while he stared uncomprehendingly at Menzies.

"Take a—pull—pull—on those—those weather—" began Menzies again.

Struggling against overpowering weariness, he looked like, he spoke like a man hypnotized. His words were barely audible. Slowly his head drooped. It sank lower and lower. He sprawled; he slumped down, and, with his arms upon the taffrail, fell asleep, his head upon his left upper arm and his face buried in the crook of his elbow.

CRADDOCK appeared as a man not sure whether he were awake or dreaming. From Menzies he looked down to the men on the deck below. Then, noting Billings' upturned face and glassy eyes, he turned to me once more. I answered the unvoiced question in his puzzled eyes with one brief word—

"Mutiny, sir," said I.

Instantly the wonder left Captain Craddock's face.

"My God, why didn't you say so before?" he cried. He strode to the taffrail, looked down to the steamer's waiting

boat, and called to the officer in her stern sheets, "Come aboard, and bring your men with you please, sir!"

Followed by his boat's crew, the steamer officer came over the rail.

"Keep an eye on those men, sir," said Craddock, pointing to the hands. He turned to me again. "All right," he said, "Now get ahead, and let's have the straight of it from the beginning."

"It began when the *Glenalder* was lost, sir," said I.

"What the devil are you talking about?" he demanded.

"You were on the board of inquiry into the *Glenalder's* loss," said I.

"What the devil's that got to do with this?" he exclaimed.

"Mr. Menzies there, he—he was her—second mate, sir," I continued, hardly able to speak for the torture of my leg.

Craddock called to the steamer officer to send two of his men to the poop. They lifted me and laid me on the chart room settee.

"That better?" he asked.

"A lot better, sir," I replied.

"Well, then, for God's sake talk!" said he.

I told him the whole story. Starting with my meeting with Menzies in the Bethel, I told him just what Menzies had told me; word for word, as nearly as I could. I told him how I had found Menzies in charge of the policeman.

"Too damned bad," he muttered at that.

Then while I told him how, as I slept, Menzies had taken the ship out, astonishment and anger came to his eyes. It was easy to see how disappointed he was, how furious, with the man whom he had defended in court. But when I quoted, "You'd not see Craddock lying at anchor in this, I'll bet," he started. While I spoke of Menzies' fearless handling of the crew he nodded approvingly despite his wrath.

"Yes, I've a captaincy now, and by heaven I'll sail her. If I've done Craddock a dirty trick I'll show him at any rate that I know my business," I quoted. The hint of a smile came to Craddock's face at that. "She's used to Craddock's driving, and now she can get used to mine," I repeated.

"He said that, did he?" queried Captain Craddock.

"I'd hate to play Craddock a dirty trick. I didn't look at it that way," I continued and, quoting Menzies yet again, added, "I meant no harm to Captain Craddock. I took the ship to sea to show old Cottier something."

The shadow of a smile came to Captain Craddock's face.

"I remember how Cottier overrode *me*," he muttered. "Cottier had a touch of dyspepsia that morning."

"Craddock wouldn't let any steam kettle pass him," I quoted, telling Captain Craddock of how Menzies had answered me when I urged him to take sail off the ship.

"By gad, Cottier's as much to blame as he is!" exclaimed Captain Craddock. Looking from the doorway he called to the steamer officer to come to the poop. "Bring your men up and take this man off to your ship, sir," he ordered. "He's got a smashed leg for your doctor to mend."

The steamer men lifted me. They bore me past Menzies, still fast asleep on the taffrail. At their heels came Craddock. The ship was still. No wind—only a promise on the water, far off.

Captain Craddock laid a hand on Menzies' shoulder. Menzies looked up drowsily, saw the steamer and, still unaware of Craddock, tried to shake off his stupor.

"Take a pull on those weather braces," he mumbled.

"Go down to the mate's room and turn in," said Craddock, shaking Menzies' shoulder.

Then at last Menzies wakened and saw Captain Craddock. At first he stared at him unbelivingly. Then he straightened himself. His hand came up in salute.

"I wasn't drunk when the *Glenalder* went ashore, sir," he said.

"Go down to the mate's room and turn in," said Captain Craddock again.

"The—the mate's room, sir?" asked Menzies in a puzzled voice.

"Yes; the mate's room. I'll call you when I want you," replied Craddock.

Next minute the *Carmac's* decks were out of my sight. Catspaws ruffled the water. I heard Craddock's order:

"All hands to the weather braces! Step along!"

Blocks rattled. The *Carmac's* sails bellied to the rising breeze.

The steamer men hoisted the boat to her davits, lifted me from her and carried me to a stateroom. Presently, with my leg set, I was carried out to the deck and laid upon a cot in the sun. Far astern I saw the *Carmac*. She was lying over a little to a full sail breeze. I saw something drop from her railing and knew that Billings was buried at last.

Soon the *Carmac's* hull dipped. Then her foresail sank beneath the sea. I saw only her white foretopsail, with the foretopgallantsail and royal above them. Her topsail dipped. Her topgallantsail gleamed for a moment, and was gone. For a little space her royal made a bright white speck on the horizon. Then she was gone, lost under the sea rim far astern.

After three days of gentle breezes the wind rose and a high sea began to make. The steamer wallowed, dipping her bluff bows deep and rolling like a fat, short winded sow. The wind rose higher and higher. The sky grew dark and lowering. Lying in my bunk, I looked out upon a tumultuous ocean.

On the fourth morning when I wakened and looked from my door at dawn the *Carmac* was close abeam, less than an eighth of a mile away. She was under full sail, running like a deer, riding like a swan. Sheets of spray were driving over her. From her headsail leeches sheets of water poured. Her long foreyard gleamed wet.

Menzies was on the *Carmac's* poop, in charge. I crawled from my bunk, and to my open door. He saw me at once, took off his hat, and waved. Clinging to my door frame, I waved back to him.

Soon the *Carmac's* hull dipped. Then her crojick sank beneath the sea. I saw only her white mizzen topsails, with the mizzen topgallantsail and royal above them. Her topsails dipped. Her toplantsail gleamed for a moment, and was gone. For a little space her royal made a bright white speck on the horizon. Then the *Carmac* was gone, lost under the sea rim far ahead.

A Tale of the Borneo Jungle

A Civilized Meal

By L. G. BLOCHMAN

CARL WINTERS went down to Singapore to meet Jim, leaving Mike Bealby in charge of the mine. Carl often left things in Bealby's hands, for he trusted implicitly his young and handsome foreman. Not that the other whites in Malabang distrusted him, for Bealby had a way with people—an easy going, easy spoken manner that lulled any doubts that might otherwise have been generated by the ambiguous glance of his weasel eyes. But Carl did more than merely trust Bealby; he lavished upon him a mute, paternal affection that was perhaps somehow intended, by proxy, for the absent Jim.

And now Jim had come back to his father and the East—Jim who had been born in the East, but who had never seen it with eyes of reason. When Jim was three, his mother died in Singapore, and Carl had taken the boy home to his sister to be raised properly. Whenever he could afford it, Carl took a trip across the world to see his son. He wanted to take the boy East when he was only fifteen,

but the sister put up impassioned arguments to the contrary. The boy was doing so well in school, was showing such an aptitude for study, that it would be a crime not to allow him to continue learning, Carl was told. He was told the same thing every year until the boy was graduated from college with honors in mathematics. Then Carl had his way about showing the boy something of the world. Jim was to be exposed to a few knocks, to smooth off some of the rough corners.

Although Carl never dared mention the subject to his sister, he had plans more closely linked with the future than a mere post-graduate Cook's tour for Jim. He had visions of the two of them, father and son, developing the Winters mining concession into one of the biggest things in Borneo. The concession was paying now, but never as much as the assays indicated it should. Carl attributed the difference to the primitive methods he had to use—coolie muckers and old fashioned sluicing.

One day there would be dredges and a cyaniding plant—Carl had about enough money to get one dredge when Jim arrived—the jungle would be cleared for miles around, and a new town would spring up, their town . . .

Of course, Jim would be the big figure in all of this. Carl would work with him, but always in the background, happy to see his son accomplishing what his father could not. For Jim had things his father lacked: Learning, polish, a mind trained in the modern world to cope with modern problems. Jim would stand up with the greatest of them—one day. For the moment he would start by helping his father wash gold in the jungle.

But the jungle was no place for Jim. He was a tall, pale, sensitive kid with big dark eyes and a body no better for having hunched over books in a big city. His character was a little anemic, too, from being spared contact with life by his aunt's well meant solicitude. And he hated the East from the moment his father met him in Singapore.

His abhorrence was in no way changed by the reception which Bealby had organized in Malabang, the insignificant river port which to Carl Winters and the other white men in the region was the center of civilization. Malabang, with its rude, perspiring heartiness mustered by the suave, smiling Mike Bealby, was to Jim the ultimate end of the earth—until he saw and despised the primitive camp behind the town where Carl was washing gold. He was even cool to Bealby, to Carl's surprise and dismay. Why should any one dislike Bealby?

Then, while homesickness and disgust still twisted the boy's mind, fever racked his body. His first weeks at Malabang were one continual chill that shook his teeth half out of his head. As soon as he was better, he asked his father to send him home.

Some fathers would have talked the matter out with the boy and sought an understanding. But Carl Winters was a slow thinking, introspective, somewhat inarticulate father. The only thing he could find to say was that he would "think it over." That probably meant that the kid would stay the two years originally agreed upon, because Carl, in his rude, fatherly way, had his heart set on making a man of him. And, like most persons who think much and say little, Carl had that stubbornness born of ingrowing opinions. He appealed to Mike Bealby to help him convert the boy to the East.

Bealby renewed his back patting, why-worry tactics with increased vigor, but he got little apparent response from Jim. Whenever he saw Bealby approaching, the boy would go off somewhere with a book. For three months he read and reread the same few volumes he had brought with him. When he apparently knew them by heart and could find nothing else worth his attention, he took long, solitary walks. Despite the hot exertion of walking in the tropics, Bealby followed doggedly, talking quietly, as persistent as the boy was silent. After about five months of this Jim began to thaw slightly.

CARL was pleased. He even considered it a good sign when Jim went into Malabang with Bealby over the weekend and came back howling drunk. The boy was twenty-one and old enough to learn for himself just how tight a man could decently get. Perhaps a little mild debauchery was just what Jim needed.

Time proved otherwise, however. Although the boy was seen more and more with Bealby, his melancholia persisted. He seemed to grow even more sallow and dull eyed as the months passed. Puzzled, Carl decided to try giving the boy responsibility. He explained this to Bealby when he put the boy in charge of the mine while he took a trip down the coast to look at a dredge that a man wanted to sell.

On this trip Carl had a flash of intuition. It may have been because he was away from Malabang and could get a clearer perspective of the situation. Whatever it was, it made him see of a sudden that Jim was not at all like his father; that the boy was brittle, and instead of having the rough corners rounded off by the knocks of the world, he was cracking down the middle. Carl decided to send Jim home as soon as he got back to the mine.

Carl was away for a little over a week. The day he returned, the kid was waiting on the rickety little pier that stuck out into the mangrove choked river at Malabang, more miserable looking than ever. The despair in his white, haunted face frightened Carl. He sensed fresh trouble. When he inquired, the kid hesitated and said a touch of the fever had come back, but Carl didn't believe him.

"I've got good news for you, boy," said Carl, stammering in his haste to gladden the kid with his decision. "You're going home as soon as we can make connections . . ."

The announcement made no impression on the foreboding mask the boy wore. Worried, Carl decided to keep him for tiffin in Malabang before going up to the mine.

Tiffin in Malabang meant eating in the two-story whitewashed barn which Pierre Larue glorified with the name of Hotel de Paris. There was also the club, but that was for men like the assistant resident, the bank manager, the shipping agent, or the forestry officer. Planters and miners ate at Larue's place and considered they had the best of it. Larue, a white haired Frenchman, was understood to have been once a convict at the New Caledonia penal colony, but nobody cared as long as he was a first class chef. The fact that he looked after the kitchen himself made the Hotel de Paris, with its cask aged brandy, its wheezy phonograph, and its dog-eared stacks of months-old papers, something of a temple of culture.

Carl couldn't get the boy to talk before tiffin. Jim said nothing while he picked half heartedly at the roast chicken, which Larue boasted had been fattened by hand. When the silence continued until brandies were brought on, Carl exclaimed—

"Well, son, you haven't told me you're glad to be going home."

"I can't go home," said Jim without looking up.

"Why not?" asked Carl, half hopeful that the boy was going to stick it out. But Jim apparently changed the subject.

"I hope you haven't committed yourself to buy that dredge," said the boy, still looking at his plate, "because you can't buy it. You haven't the money."

"Don't be silly," said Carl. "I've plenty. There's money in the bank."

"I'm not silly," the boy replied. "You haven't enough to make any kind of payment. You're account is practically flat. I drew on it."

"You? How—?"

The boy looked up at last and gulped down a glass of brandy.

"I forged your name to a check," he said.

Carl smiled uncertainly, fearfully.

"What's the joke?" he ventured.

"No joke," said the youth solemnly. "They didn't question the check at the bank. They knew you were in some kind of deal for the dredge, and supposed you

wanted the money for that. They knew you trusted me."

"And they— Where's the money?"

"Mike Bealby's got it."

Carl passed a hand over his forehead.

"So you're pushing the blame off on Bealby, are you?"

"No," said the boy gravely. "I think you ought to know that Bealby is a slick crook and has been robbing you for years, but I'm blaming no one but myself. I'm every low thing you think I am. You were right in wanting to make a man of me, but it was an impossible job. I'm a worm. And Bealby knew how to play up to my weakness. He made capital of my homesickness; he's been feeding me liquor and dope to make reality seem more pleasant. He told me what I wanted to hear—that I ought to be back with fellows my age, in a white man's country. He said he was going to take me, as soon as he got the money for the trip, and set us up in business once we got home. We were on a terrific carouse while you were away. That was when he explained how we were to get money. He knew the bank wouldn't question the check."

The boy threw a wallet on the table in front of his stony faced father.

"There's nearly a quarter of the money," said the boy. "Bealby has the rest. I was supposed to meet him, but of course when I sobered up and realized what I had done I couldn't go through with it. I couldn't stand being a thief. That doesn't change my being one, but I wanted to tell you the story myself. I waited for you, so you would know that at least I was enough of a man to stand before you and make a clean breast—"

Carl was a little dazed. His lips moved for several seconds before he could say—

"What do you expect to do about it?"

The boy was standing. He made a limp, hopeless gesture.

"There's not much I can do—now," he said.

CARL sat silent, a bewildered, weather beaten little man, who five minutes ago had seemed ten years younger than his graying hair, but who now seemed ten years older. A slight twist to his lips, a slight lift to his bushy eyebrows might have meant pity, contempt, restrained anger—or merely crushing disappointment.

"Well—"

The boy leaned forward as though he were going to make an announcement. His arm flexed as though he wanted to extend his hand. He did neither. Turning abruptly, he walked toward the door. He moved proudly, his head erect, but his knees bent and straightened with strange, jerky motions. He stepped into the blinding blaze of the midday sun and disappeared around the corner of the veranda.

Carl stared after him as one hypnotized. He continued staring for a full minute, his shoulders slumped a little, perspiration bathing his face. Suddenly he sat up straight.

From somewhere outside came the sharp bark of an explosion.

The sound might be that of the customs house motorboat backfiring; or of Gus Kaapel, the drunken halfcaste, shooting rats; or of—

Carl sprang to his feet, upsetting a bottle of Pierre's best brandy. He saw people running past the veranda. He ran, too, a strange cold numbing him.

There was a crowd in the street: Malays, Dusuns, Chinese, Sikhs, a few Europeans. They were grouped in a circle. As Carl approached, the circle opened to make way for men carrying an inanimate form. Another man followed with a blood spattered topee.

The kid had done a good job of it. His fingers still clutched blue steel. The bullet had crashed into his right temple. He must have died instantly.

While they laid the boy on a bench on the hotel veranda, Carl fought his way through the crowd, kicking, pushing, swearing. Reaching his son's side, he spun savagely. Profanely he told every one to clear out. The crowd fell away.

Slowly Carl turned to the body of his boy. For a long minute he gazed at the bloody face. Fascinated, he sank to one knee. His lips twitched, as though he were trying to pray but could not find the proper words. Finally he rose to his feet, still staring at the boy, and said fervently—

"God curse Mike Bealby!"

Then he loosened the gun from the youth's grasp, clasped the dead fingers in farewell, slipped the gun into his pocket and strode off the veranda.

Five minutes later he had roused the assistant resident from the beginning of his afternoon nap.

The assistant resident was sympathetic but negative. He agreed that Mike Bealby was morally responsible for Jim's death, yet he could see no legal possibility of holding him to answer. Even the crime of forgery was actually committed, not by Bealby, but by Jim. As for complicity, aiding or abetting the crime of forgery, the only man who could testify definitely to these charges had just killed himself. No, there was really nothing the law could do in the matter.

Carl thanked the assistant resident. He had expected this sort of an answer, yet he wanted it known that he had tried to secure justice through regular channels before taking the matter into his own hands. After all, Malabang was an outpost of law and order.

Carl made funeral arrangements and wrote a letter to the boy's aunt, telling how Jim had died of fever. Then he made a quick trip to the mine. He knew Bealby would not be there, but he picked up his Malay bearer Achmet and several porter coolies. He also took equipment for a long hunt, for Bealby knew his way around the jungle.

Returning to Malabang, Carl got a *prau* to take him down the coast until he could pick up something faster. Three-fourths of the European population of Malabang saw him off, wished him good luck individually, and cheered him collectively as the *prau* swung downstream.

He headed for an island which lay across the mouth of the river, about six miles offshore. There was a scattered white population of seven on this island, which, because it was isolated enough to be obscure and close enough to be in touch, would make an excellent temporary hiding place, Carl reasoned. He found he had reasoned correctly, for Mike Bealby had been there for two days, leaving abruptly the night before on a launch that did coasting service. The launch, it seems, had just come from Malabang with news of Jim Winters' suicide . . .

Carl followed the trail down the coast, picking up the scent again at Kuala Kalapa. Carl had half expected Bealby to come to Kuala Kalapa, for mail packets called at this river-mouth port every so often, thus giving Bealby access to Batavia or Singapore.

At Kuala Kalapa, however, Carl found himself two days behind his quarry. Learning that the mail steamer was not due for a week, Bealby had hopped a sternwheeler that made the long jaunt into the far reaches of the river. The news flattered Carl, for it meant that Bealby either knew or had guessed that Carl was after him, and preferred taking his chances in the interior to a fairly certain meeting with his pursuer on the coast.

AND BEALBY had a fine start. The sternwheeler usually took four days on the up trip, three days on the down; seven in all. It would therefore be five days before the river steamer returned to pick up Carl and his retinue to resume the chase. But, while Carl was in *pourparlers* with native boatmen for makeshift transportation upstream, the sternwheeler showed up, nearly four days ahead of time. She had cut short her usual run in the upper reaches because of constant reports of unrest among the Dyak tribes, and had returned to Kuala Kalapa for an armed guard before making the full schedule.

Two and one-half days later Carl, Achmet and the coolies went ashore in the

village indicated by the skipper as the landing place of Bealby.

"Do not go too far inland or we can not guarantee you protection," warned Lieutenant Klijn, of the armed guard.

Carl was not seeking protection. All he sought was a clear trail to follow quickly. He found it. Bealby had headed north, evidently intending to cross the frontier into the British protected states and getting thence to Singapore, or perhaps the Philippines.

Carl tracked Bealby from rest house to rest house, and then, when rest houses ceased, from *dessa* to *dessa*. Knowing Bealby, he could picture every move of the flight. Being a genial looking chap with a persuasive voice, Bealby had doubtless soft soaped whatever minor colonial officials he had come across, and had received official escort for the first stages of his journey. Then, knowing enough of the language to be bland in Malay, he would cajole food and shelter out of native headmen and, establishing an impression of mysterious importance, be furnished with guides from one *dessa* to the next.

His own nonchalance, however, was evidently making him too sure of his own safety. Inquiry indicated to Carl that the man he sought did not start very early in the morning, and stopped promptly at sunset if not before. Carl ordered long, hard marches. There was a moon, so he halted in the heat of the day and traveled at night when he heard of a *dessa* ahead. This latter practise bred near-mutiny in his retinue, for coast Malays do not like following jungle trails at night or sleeping in strange *dessas* they have not seen by daylight. Furthermore, suspicion and unrest increased as they went deeper into the jungle.

Men went about armed, walking softly, turning quickly, waiting for something they could not or would not explain. But the gap between Carl Winters and Mike Bealby was decreasing. It was reduced to perhaps half a day when the head man of a Malay *dessa* advised Carl not to go on.

"Farther you will find only Dyaks," said the *dato*. "Stay here."

Carl, however, was not to be dissuaded from his objective. Even though he had to threaten his Malays, he pushed on. He was too close to give up now.

That evening he came upon a Dyak *dessa* on the bank of a small stream. Like many Dyak *dessas*, the whole village was one house—a long, stilted structure of bamboo, with a roof of *alang-alang*. The big hut seemed capable of housing at least fifty families, yet the vicinity appeared deserted except for an old woman carrying a basket from the rice granary perched behind the communal house. Carl called to the woman, who gave him a quick glance and hurried into the house.

Carl climbed the bamboo ladder after her. He walked down a long gallery between two rows of rooms. On the walls hung the dried heads of former tribal conquests, leering at him with black, shriveled faces as he passed. In the doorways of the rooms he saw more women, who met his questions with hostile silence. When he continued to ask for the chief, he was told at last that the chief was gone. All the men were gone. Crops had not been good. For miles around the rice had been bad. This was because there had been no sacrificial heads for five years. The *orang blanda* had forbidden the men to seek fresh heads, and the crop gods did not understand it was the fault of the whites. Yet there must be rice. The Rice Mother must be made happy again . . .

Carl looked at the rows of heads hanging on the long wall, and experienced chill, nauseous pangs in his interior. Achmet must have felt the same pangs, for he repeated his advice to turn back. The coolies, he said, absolutely refused to go farther. Carl replied that they could go back if they were afraid, but that he was going on. Only they would sleep here tonight if it could be arranged.

The women were uncertain about offering hospitality. They were not sure the presence of a stranger would not interfere with the elaborate ritual of *pemali*

imposed upon them by the absence of their men. They took Carl to the only man left in the *dessa*, an aged cripple.

The cripple said he thought hospitality might be offered, as long as the women made the usual *pemali* of keeping swords constantly with them, so that the men, absent in the jungle, might not be taken by surprise; of retiring very late and arising very early, so that the absent men might be always vigilant; of not putting grease on their hair, so that the absent men might not slip at a crucial moment.

So Carl stayed at the *dessa*. In a sense, he slept, although at no time was his slumber more than an uneasy, fitful doze, regardless of how tired he was. He started at slight sounds, at night noises from the jungle. Once he sat erect, listening for half an hour, after he thought he had heard feet creaking over the bamboo floor. At the first glimmer of dawn he was up.

The Dyak women were stirring already. Achmet was, also. He told Carl that the coolies had run off during the night. Carl was not surprised. Neither was he in a humor to listen to the renewed pleas of Achmet to turn back. Carl was stubborn. What if the coolies had taken his rifle? He felt the weight of the kid's pistol in his holster, and knew he had to go on. He told Achmet to start back if he wanted. But Achmet dreaded a long jungle trip alone as much as he dreaded going on. Reluctantly he picked up what was left of the pack, after the coolies had got into it, and followed.

THEY came upon Mike Bealby in midafternoon. The trail they were following was the overgrown ruin of a road some optimistic colonial administrator had once tried to build to the frontier. Through a clearing which had once been a paddy field, Carl saw Bealby half a mile ahead, trudging along behind a brown guide. An hour later he saw him about a hundred yards off, resting on a moss covered fallen tree.

Carl motioned Achmet to stay behind while he crept forward. The suffocating atmosphere reverberated with the strident clangor of ten thousand cicadas, covering any sound Carl may have made in his advance. He was able to come within twenty yards of Bealby unobserved. He saw his man stretched out on the broad log, his eyes closed. Just like Bealby; had to have his afternoon nap, no matter what happened. Carl wondered what had become of the man's guide. He looked about. Farther down the trail the undergrowth was closing on a brown form. For a second Carl speculated on the guide's mission in the undergrowth, but the question did not bother him long. There was business at hand.

He drew the kid's gun, took another step forward, clicked off the safety. A little pressure on the trigger, and his mission would be ended. Mike Bealby would die without knowing what had struck him—which would have spoiled the whole point of the matter. Carl wanted Bealby to see justice coming, to know that he was paying for his misdeeds. He called in a low, even voice—

"Mike Bealby, you cur, stand up."

Carl's voice must have come to Bealby in a nightmare that had been following him, a bad dream that he knew would some day become a reality. He started at the first word, sat up, twisting to snatch his own gun. His rapid, surprised movements threw him off his balance. He rolled off the log on Carl's side, while his gun splashed into a foot of stagnant, tea colored water beside the trail.

Bealby gave his lost weapon a quick glance. Then, getting deliberately to his feet, he faced Carl Winters with calm and fearless eyes. He did not grovel and ask for quarter, for he knew there was no quarter to be given.

"Hello, Carl," he said. "You caught up with me sooner than I thought you would. You must have been walking to beat hell!"

He eyed the gun in Carl's hand.

In a second of silence, Carl was thinking of all the venomous names he had given Bealby since the boy's death. He

had planned to hurl a volley of invective at Bealby when the time came to settle accounts, but now that time had come he was again inarticulate. He opened his mouth, but he said nothing.

Then a howl arose somewhere behind him, a human cry fraught with desperation and pain. It mounted, quavering, above the hum of the jungle. At first Carl thought he could distinguish words, Malay words, frantically appealing for help. If words they were, they wailed on into helpless, hopeless gibberish, dying in a gurgle.

Both Carl and Bealby cocked their heads, listening. The cry was not repeated. Carl nervously gripped his gun.

"That your bearer back there, Carl?" asked Bealby.

Carl nodded.

"They got him," said Bealby. "Dyaks. I heard they were after heads."

Carl moistened his lips. Bealby was undoubtedly right. Dyaks had more than likely killed Achmet, and thereby changed the entire complexion of the universe. Evidently Bealby's guide had led him into a trap—with Carl and Achmet following. If Carl killed Bealby now, he would be alone to make his way out of hostile Dyak country. Impossible. Now that the latent native explosion had been touched off by a first killing, a man alone had one chance in a thousand of getting through. Two men would have a fighting chance to make the coast, because the Dyak, for all his head hunting, is not particularly brave in the face of firearms. The head hunting is done for religious reasons, but the Dyak is without the fatalism of the Moslem Malay, and does not relish killing when his own life may be in jeopardy.

He would make quick work of the lone traveler, but would have a healthier respect for two. To kill one of a pair would be to invite retaliation with white man's arms, before the second could be destroyed.

"Mike," said Carl suddenly, with a gesture of his gun, "fish your pistol out of that swamp and be damned quick about it. Maybe you can wipe it dry enough to shoot."

As he finished speaking, the bamboo haft of a spear quivered into the fallen tree beside Bealby.

Carl turned in time to see a head above the undergrowth, a brown head with flat nose and thin lips, with a band of plaited rattan encircling glossy black hair—a Dyak head.

Carl fired. The head disappeared. Others appeared. More spears flew. A chorus of hoarse cries echoed. A shot cracked.

"My God, Carl, they've got my carbine!" exclaimed Bealby.

Carl did not reply. He was shooting futilely at the fleeting targets presented by brown heads rustling furtively through the foliage. Before he had emptied his gun, not another head was visible. It was the jungle, vast and inscrutable, that symbolized the enemy. Carl had the jungle to shoot at, crowding in about him, shielding the shadowy death that reached out from its steamy recesses. But shooting at shadows was nerve wracking business when from unexpected angles the unseen enemy hurled back spears, swift and uncomfortably close. Carl ducked behind a clump of cannas.

"That blighter who stole my carbine can't set the sights," said Bealby, coming to his side. "He's shooting all over the shop. I'm going to sneak up and take it away from him."

He began to crawl forward.

AT THE SAME instant a slender dart imbedded its point with a snap in the smooth gray trunk of a durian tree to Carl's left. A glance told Carl he had barely escaped the venomous *upas* tipped shaft of a blowgun missile. He fired twice in the direction of the hidden marksman. A shower of darts came in reply.

He crouched to reload his magazine, stirred by a strange feeling of helplessness in the face of an invisible foe.

It was with a sense of relief that he saw a Dyak—a brown form, naked except

for a loincloth of bark fabric—gliding along a branch overhanging the path up which Bealby was creeping.

Bealby advanced slowly, oblivious to his danger. Carl watched him move under the bough, saw a knife gleam above as the Dyak prepared to drop. In the split second it took the Dyak to swing one leg over the branch, indecision flashed a dozen conflicting impulses through Carl's mind.

A blowgun dart whirred past his face.

He squeezed the trigger.

The Dyak knife wielder screamed as he clung to the bough, hanging head down, trying to swing himself up again. Bealby, suddenly made aware of his predicament, yelled too. Carl sensed a chance for a psychological offensive, threw back his head and uttered blood curdling howls until his eyes grew round with the exertion. Then he emptied his gun, raking the underbrush, still shouting.

This time there was no answering volley of spears and darts. The cracking of the carbine ceased. The cries of the wounded Dyak grew fainter as he joined the retreat. The two white men had won their first skirmish, and were not feeling the least bit pleased over it.

They went back up the trail and found Achmet's headless body. Carl bent over it.

Bealby stood behind him, taking wet shells out of his gun. He held the gun by the barrel, hefting it. It was a heavy gun and, swung by the barrel, carried enough weight to crack a man's skull. Bealby raised the gun, then glanced around him. Gloom was beginning to seep into the jungle, redolent with the warm smell of damp earth, rotting leaves, and fetid marsh. The cicadas sang the louder to warn man and beast of the stealthy approach of night. The stagnant air seemed to throb with a rhythmic beat, which might have been the fateful tattoo of a distant tom-tom, or merely the pulsation of blood in the ears. Again Bealby looked down at the unprotected back of Carl. Again he looked at the darkening jungle. He put his gun into his holster and tapped the other on the shoulder.

"Come on," he said. "Take his *kris* and let's go. We've got a long walk ahead of us if we get out of this. And tonight, if we have luck, we might get to the outpost I was heading for. I think there're only one European and two Eurasian clerks there, but that helps, what with hell breaking loose."

They got to the outpost an hour after dark—or rather they got to the spot where the outpost had been. The building was a heap of embers, still smoldering. Somewhere on the shadowy edge of the clearing a dog was howling at death. What had happened to his master was tragically easy to guess.

"Let's get away from here," said Carl.

Bealby grunted his agreement.

Their ears filled with the faint throbbing that pulsated through the night, they turned their steps away, plunging back into the darkness that held at once security and lurking dangers. By morning they had completely lost their bearings.

Carl Winters and Mike Bealby kept no track of time in the days that followed. Time did not exist in the misery and torture of the struggle to live, to reach the coast.

They followed streams, for all streams sooner or later reach the sea. Moreover, in the interior of Borneo, they reach scattered settlements. Yet Carl and Bealby came across no sign of European dwellings. What rare native *dessas* they saw were obviously Dyak. They detoured to avoid these villages, because the jungle still reverberated with drum beats at night. The campaign for fresh heads to appease the Rice Mother was making backsliders of all Dyak tribes in the region.

The two white men had the constant impression that they were being followed, that eyes were always regarding them from the green tangle of jungle, wherein a pulse throbbed. At times the rhythmic beat seemed very near. At other times it was so faint that it might have been their feverish imagination. But to them

it was ever real, ever menacing. They grew dizzy from sleeplessness in their vigil against it. Then they slept in short relays.

Twice they were actually attacked, and twice they routed the shadowy enemy with volleys of pistol shots that set the monkeys to screeching in the trees.

They plodded on, heavy footed, swollen from insect bites. They were always bleeding where they had torn loose the leeches that dropped from the foliage in clammy clusters. They were slashed by the knife edged *alang-alang* grass that often grew shoulder high.

Wearily they sloshed through stinking swamp and cut through tangled creepers in the rain forest. They were chilled by miasmic mists by night and broiled in the steamy heat of day. Sudden rains pounded down from inky skies, which, ten minutes later, would glare with pitiless, brassy incandescence. They had a vague idea where they were. At least they knew that, going from tributary to stream, they must be approaching the coast, little by painful little.

Day after day they ate bananas and plantains, with occasional jackfruit and durians.

"Damned smelly durians!" Bealby would complain as he split the tough, prickly hull of the big green spheroids. "Coolie food. I'd give my life for just one more civilized meal!"

Then the two men would suck the pungent pulp from around the seeds in silence.

THEY built a raft with giant bamboo cut with Achmet's *kris*, and lashed together with green rattan pulled from the undergrowth. The raft floated downstream for nearly half a day, until it swung sidewise into a roaring series of rapids, hung up on a burnished rock, and went to pieces.

Carl made the bank, his gun dry inside his topee. As he watched Bealby swept into a whirlpool, helplessly fighting the torrent, he realized the man could not swim. He let him struggle a while, watching, thinking. Bealby's head disappeared in a welter of foam. When it reappeared, Carl snatched a long bamboo from the wreckage caught by stones. He ran along the bank, held the pole to Bealby, and fished him out.

Bealby made no comment on his being rescued, knowing that there was nothing altruistic about Carl's act. His only words were oaths—smoking strings of them—over having lost his gun in the water. There was one gun between them now, the kid's automatic with which Carl had intended killing Bealby. Yet when it came his turn to sleep, Carl handled over the gun to Bealby. When Bealby slept, he gave it back.

Neither man spoke of the events which had made them hunter and hunted—until in the wink of an eye the jungle had made them allies against a common danger. Neither mentioned the kid's name, though both must have thought of it often. Their enmity was thrust aside, yet friendship did not resume. They spoke mechanically, in the routine of the struggle to live. They talked of the probable distance to the coast.

One day they saw crocodiles and were hopeful. They were not absolutely sure of the sign, for crocodiles sometimes come fairly far upstream. Then they saw coconut trees and knew they were near the sea. They knocked down green coconuts, slashed off the tops and drank the refreshing, effervescent milk.

They built another raft, and on it, early one morning, they swung with their small stream into a broad, coffee colored river. There was something familiar about the banks of the river, about the hills on either side. It appeared to be the Malabang River. By mid-morning they knew it was the Malabang River.

At noon they poled their raft in among the *nipa* palms that fringed the bank above Malabang, center of civilization, beacon of culture, outpost of law and order.

It was Gus Kaapel, the drunken half-caste, who first saw Carl Winters and Mike Bealby on their return to Malabang. He saw them as they passed the red

roofed bank shanty and started across the open space in front of the assistant residency. They were walking somewhat wearily, side by side, but Gus Kaapel had just finished his fourth gin *pahit* in quick succession, and to him they seemed to be moving very rapidly indeed. With an excited shout he bounded into the tiffin room of the Hotel de Paris to announce that Carl had found Bealby and was at this moment chasing him around the *padang* preparatory to killing him.

Immediately all eating was suspended. Pierre Larue's tiffin customers crowded through the door to the veranda. They saw two haggard men come tramping out of the white hot glare. Ignoring all greetings, showing no sign of recognition, Carl pushed Bealby before him through the crowd on the veranda, into the tiffin room. The two men sat at a small table.

With a strange air of nervous ceremony, Carl asked Pierre to repeat the details of the day's menu. He ordered a Gargantuan meal, demanding some courses cooked to order, debating meticulous points of seasoning, carefully weighing the problem of proper liquid accompaniment.

The spectators, who had filed silently back into the room to resume their meal, were puzzled. Was this the end of Carl Winters' punitive expedition—tiffin with the enemy? Was it possible that they had reached some reconciliation? Or were the two men merely tamed by the jungle, had the fight taken out of them by the ordeal of the past weeks? Outwardly, at least, they were greatly changed from the two men Malabang knew six weeks before. Their topees were grimy and misshapen, their clothes were in tatters. Their beards were grown —Bealby's reddish and scraggly; Carl's gray and matted. Their hands, arms and faces were covered with stings and scabs. They could be smelled thirty feet away.

Little by little the buzz of voices and the clink of cutlery on crockery began again, but it was subdued, expectant. Most of white Malabang was watching Carl Winters and Mike Bealby eat. They ate ravenously, emptying heaped dishes as fast as Pierre Larue could produce them. They ate sullenly, silently, hunched over their plates, eyeing each other constantly while trying to appear indifferent. As their stomachs filled, they grew more intent on each other, more deliberate in their own movements, more tense, waiting for something to happen. It happened when Pierre brought in a roast chicken. There were carvers on the platter.

"Give it here," said Bealby. "I'll carve."

"You will like hell!" exclaimed Carl. He arose stiffly. Bealby also got up. Twenty other men followed suit. Then Carl continued, "This is my party. You asked for just one more civilized meal. This is a final favor to you before—"

Carl didn't finish. Bealby wanted no explanation. He wanted no rum and cigaret at the foot of the guillotine. He wanted to live. And he knew that when Carl stood up, the story went right back to the moment at which Carl had come upon him in the jungle.

Bealby was quick. He snatched the carving knife from Pierre's platter, while the roast chicken bounced off in a splatter of gravy. With his knee he pushed the table over on Carl.

Dishes, bottles, glasses crashed to the floor. Carl slipped. He was down on one knee as Bealby sprang for him across the wreckage, knife poised.

Carl, too, was quick. He drew while the upraised knife and the desperate bulk of Mike Bealby were hurtling toward him. Just one shot roared from the kid's gun before the hurtling bulk hit Carl, and they went down together.

The one shot made a devastating hole, the boys noticed as they pulled Bealby off of Carl and laid him on a bench on the veranda. The residency doctor said Bealby must have died instantly.

Carl had a gash that crossed three sternal ribs, but he was able to sit up for the formal inquest. And the gash confirmed the story of self-defense told by the twenty witnesses called by the assistant resident of Malabang, pursuing his investigation in a manner befitting an outpost of law and order.

BARBER SHOP BUCKAROO

By CARL ELMO FREEMAN

WHEN I'm waitin' for a haircut, I shorely loves to sit,
An' tell it sorter scarey, for the barber's benefit.
I tell 'em how I rode 'em, at the rodeo last fall,
With only a surcingle, rode the meanest bronc of all!
I tell 'em how I watch 'im, so I'll know which way he'll jump.
When he humps up in the middle, how I rake him on the rump.
An' if I draw a jughead, how I make 'im have a fit,
When I tell it sorter scarey, for the barber's benefit.

I tell 'em how I step off, when he falls back on his pole,
An' tries to ram my freckled mug down in a badger hole.
How I stand an' let 'im waller, while he kicks an' rolls about,
A-scratchin' up my saddle, tryin' to mash the cantle out.
An' how I hook the stirrup, when he's scramblin' to his feet,
An' step back in the saddle, glue my britches to the seat.
Then, I light me up a quirley, push back my hat an' spit,
When I tell it sorter scarey, for the barber's benefit.

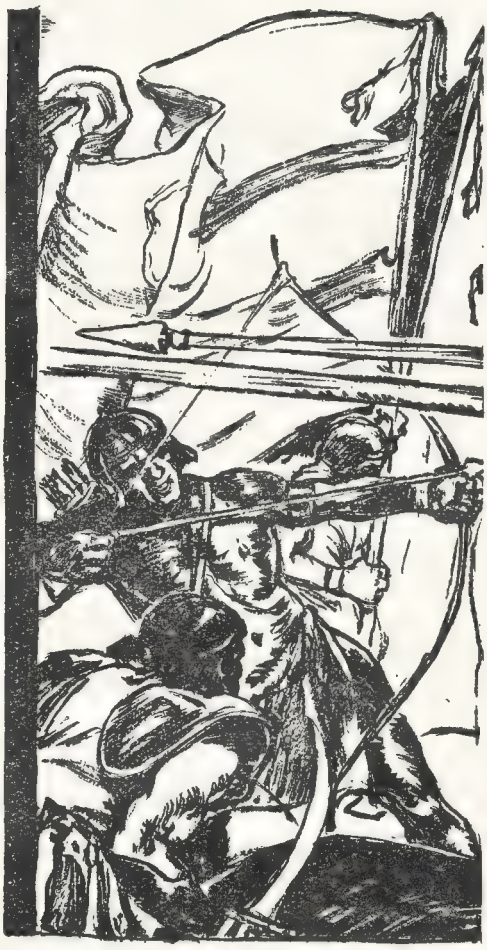
I cuss a single-cincher, boost a double-rig instead,
Say a center-fire saddle will shore slip right off his head.
A full-rig needs no buck strap, to hold the saddle snug,
She's built to stick to hosshair, like molasses to a rug.
An' I don't want no cinch-hooks, to the scratchers on my heels,
'Cause I can hang without 'em, an' rake 'im till he squeals.
I say it ain't so dangerous as a-ridin' in a jit',
When I tell it sorter scarey, for the barber's benefit.

Now I ain't no bronco buster, I am willin' to admit.
I don't crave to set no bronco, when he's havin' him a fit,
But when I'm waitin' for a haircut, I shore does love to sit,
An' tell it sorter scarey, for the barber's benefit.

A Novelette of the Iron

RICHARD THE LION HEART

By HAROLD LAMB



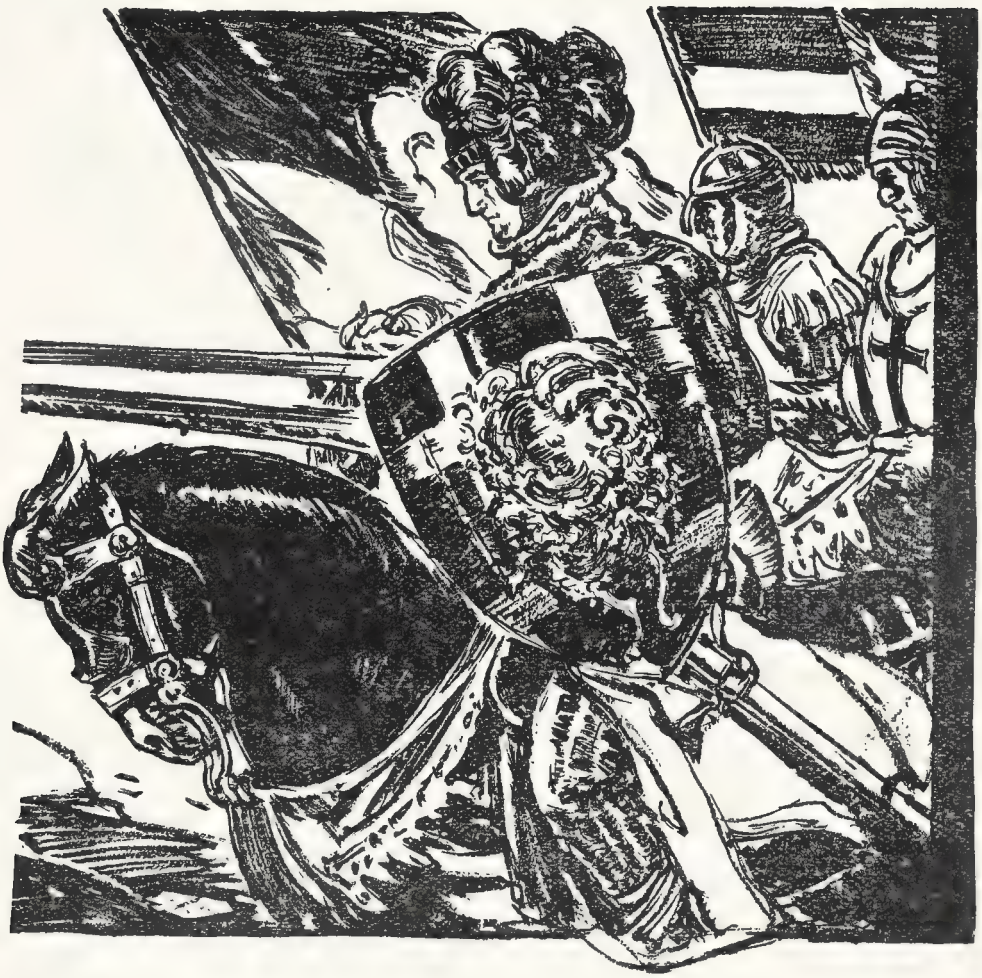
THE LION HEART had reached the camp, but not the battle line. On a pallet covered with leopard skins, under the sun scorched linen pavilion, he tossed and twisted in the grip of fever, his lips and throat covered with sores. His long, powerful arms quivered with weakness.

Yet Richard of England was in the prime of life, being thirty-four years of age, and the very figure of a king. Red hair, with a tinge of gold, fell to his massive shoulders. His forehead was smooth and broad, the dark eyes beneath set wide apart. A short beard, close trimmed in the French fashion, covered his chin.

A man he was, confident in his own strength, and intolerant of weakness. He had a boy's generosity and love of display; a restless humor that found satisfaction in the bravery of a tournament and the richness of the banquet board. He was never so pleased as when he wielded lance or sword, or tuned his own harp at a table. In every game he must have a hand, and in war he must be the leader.

On the voyage to Acre upon the coast of the Holy Land, he had lingered the

Men of the Crusades



best part of a year to champion a quarrel of his sister. His ships, scattered by a storm, had been ill treated by the Byzantines of Cyprus, and Richard had waded ashore to range the island, until he held the Byzantine prince a captive in silver chains, and his daughter a hostage. In the very cathedral of Cyprus he had married Berengaria of Navarre, his betrothed. Straightway he had embarked again with his bride, attended by his sister and the girl princess of Byzantium, and with new treasure in his coffers.

Richard cared not a jot for statecraft. His great hands were shaped for sword hilt and lance shaft rather than pen or parchment. Recklessly he had sold the royal prerogatives in England to raise money for the Crusade. He said he would have sold the city of London, if he could have found a chapman. In his veins ran the blood of Poitiers and Gascony—the hot blood of troubadours and errant princes —and he had lived, a voluntary exile from

his father's wrath at the French court until the death of his father had brought him the crown of England on the very eve of the Crusade. Fastidious, overbearing, and utterly brave, he had borne himself until now as a gallant prince-adventurer.

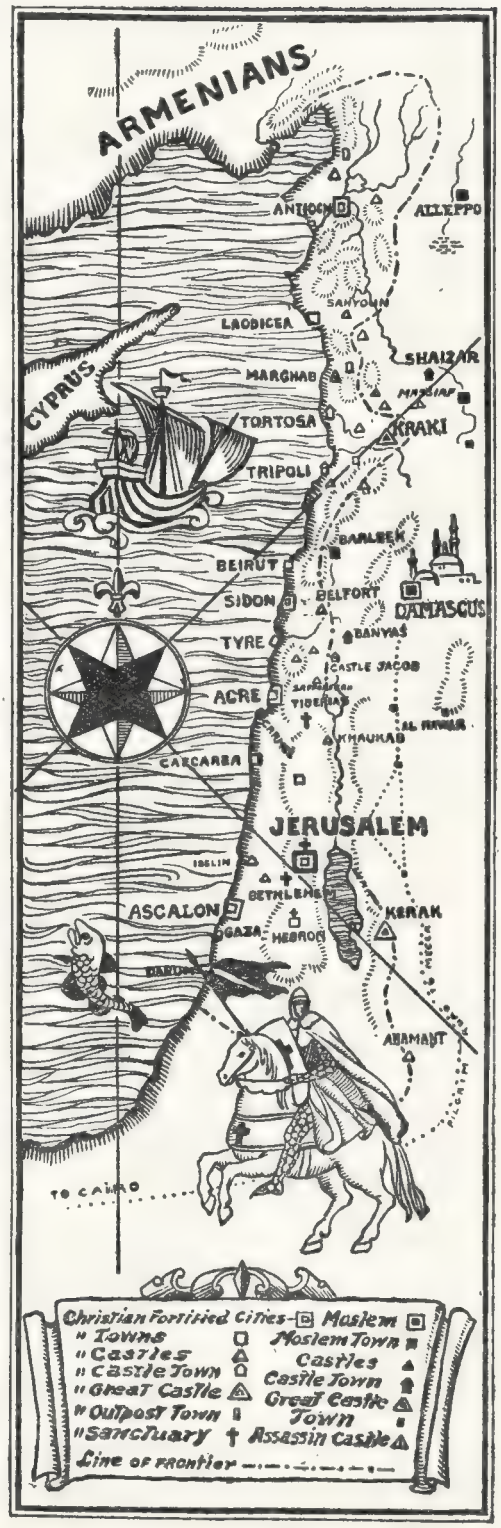
He had indeed set out upon the Crusade as if it were a new and most joyous adventure.

And on the voyage he had mortally offended his careful cousin, Philip, King of France—a youth no more than twenty-six years of age who had already reigned eleven years. A patient and disillusioned soul, cowardly in the face of personal danger, but unyielding where the welfare of his kingdom was at stake. Peering into the future, pondering frontier castles and new laws, even on the Crusade, Philip was the exact opposite of his errant cousin of England. Philip had pledged a truce with Richard, but Richard knew that he would break any pledge to gain an advantage. Philip begrudged the Crusade that put the careful scheming of years to the hazard. While Richard exulted in the hazard, and baited his timid comrade-enemy with no gentle words.

In these days Philip lingered moodily in his tent before Acre, out of joint with his surroundings, hearing uneasily that in this Holy Land William the Good of Sicily had died, and Frederick, Duke of Swabia, and the reverend Archbishop of Canterbury. His cousin, the Count of Flanders, lay dying, and even Richard was touched by the plague. Out of 12,000 Scandinavians who had come in their ships, not 200 survived. He heard that here more men fell in a single battle than in a year's campaigning in France. Outside the ditch of the camp crosses covered the clay knolls—crosses as thick as the stones in the field.

And there were graves without crosses in shallow ditches by the river where the dried up limbs of men projected through the sand.

The camp of the Crusaders, circling about the point of land where the city of



The map on this page is correct for about the year 1200 A.D.

Acre lay behind its walls, was filled with graves. The Crusaders themselves, sun scorched and lean specters of men, no longer bore the semblance of the chivalry of France and Christendom. For a year and nine months—it was now June, 1191—they had pressed the siege of the gray walls of Acre, defended by the Moslems, while Saladin with the Moslem cavalry appeared and vanished in the hills behind them—so that they were besieged in their turn.

The Crusaders encamped about Acre had looked forward to the coming of Richard the Lion Heart and Philip-Augustus of France, to end the long struggle. Now Richard lay abed with fever and Philip hesitated, bewildered by this merciless war of multitudes.

In spite of that the siege engines whirred and crashed through the day and the night, and dust hung about the gray wall of Acre. Great stones soared from the Crusaders' *perriers*, falling upon the roofs within the city. From the Moslem engines on the wall projectiles buried themselves a foot in the earth.

The Crusaders had pushed a covered ram over the filled-in *fosse*, against the base of the wall. And the Moslem engineers cast out dry wood, covering the leather bound roof of the ram. They shot down Greek fire that caught in the dry wood and burned the ram.

Then the Crusaders rolled forward a new tower, higher than the wall, and sheathed with copper. Upon this the Moslems shot clay pots for hours. The pots broke and drenched the structure with a fluid that did not burn. While the Christians within the tower gibed at them, the Moslem engineers went on shooting forth the pots—until a flaming tree trunk was sent spinning through the air against the tower. In an instant the whole tower burst into flames, roasting alive the men within it. The liquid in the pots had been naphtha.

"These Saracens shut up in the city," the veterans of Acre said to the newcomers, "are people of great and marvelous haughtiness. If they were not miscreants, we would say that we had never seen better men."

And the veterans spoke impatiently to the knights of France and England.

"Lord God, when will the assault be given? Here have come the most valiant kings of all Christianity, and the most able in attacking. Let God's will be done!"

While Richard threshed in a fever of eagerness on his pallet—waiting for the arrival of the bulk of his army with the siege engines—Philip-Augustus at length gave the order to make a general assault.

"In the morning," says Ambrose, the minstrel of the camp, "every one armed himself, longing to make the attack. You would not have been able to count all the armed men, all the goodly hauberks, all the shining helms, all the noble horses, all the white caparisonings, all the chosen knights. We had never seen so many distinguished knights, so many pennons, so many ornamented banners. They took their posts and advanced toward the wall and began to launch missiles, and attack."

Before them rumbled the standard of France—a cart drawn by mules, in the cart a staff as high as a minaret, bearing a white banner besprinkled with red, a gilt cross above it. Around the standard pressed a chosen guard of swordsmen.

And that evening the standard rolled back again. The wounded were carried back, and the dead. A great stretch of the wall had been broken down, but smoke signals from Acre had warned the army of Saladin of the attack, and fierce counter charges by the Moslem horsemen upon the camp had forced the besiegers to turn to defend themselves.

"Good Lord God," the knights cried sorrowfully, "what a poor blow we struck!"

And the harassed Philip-Augustus cried out to his men to avenge him upon the Moslems. For he felt the heat of fever in his veins, and his cousin the Count of Flanders lay cold and lifeless in his tent where candles burned and priests watched.

ANOTHER fleet put in to the shore, with the last of the French and those two captains of war, Robert, Earl of Leicester, and Andrew of Chavigny, with the best of the English men-at-arms and King Richard's engines. They went into the battle without a day's respite.

For the besiegers, maddened by their losses, fought now without giving or expecting mercy. They numbered nearly 100,000 and the broken wall was held against them by no more than 6,000 Moslems. Gone were the days of duels and truces. Newcomers in the camp burned a Moslem prisoner alive within sight of the wall, and the garrison retaliated by burning a Crusader at the stake. Day and night the pounding of the engines went on, while the English mined under the Accursed Tower, and the Moslems drove a tunnel out to meet them. In the night Arab swimmers carrying sacks of sulphur and Greek fire on their heads tried to pass the blockading vessels to enter the city; they were caught in fishing nets.

No more pigeons remained to carry news to Saladin, but a swimmer brought out a letter from the weary Meshtub and Karakush, commanders of the city.

"We are reduced," the letter said, "to such weakness that the city will be lost if you can not do something to aid us by the morrow."

On that day, the second of July, the Christians advanced again to attack. And Saladin came down from the hills to assault their lines, to draw them back from their attack upon the city. He came with all his strength—his *halka*, the veteran guard in yellow cloaks, the cavalry columns of ever victorious Taki ad-Din, the mailed Mamluks of Egypt led by Al Adil his brother. On the flanks rode the wild clans of the northern hills, Turkomans armed with long curved blades and javelins, dark Kurds of the east with their lances and painted shields. Beyond them the Arab tribes hovered like birds of prey, ready to swoop in and snatch up plunder.

Baha ad-Din, the *kadi* who was the Sultan's friend, watched Saladin's setting out, at the first dawn.

"This day," the worthy *kadi* said, "he would eat nothing, and he only drank some cups of liquid when he was urged by his physician. I did not assist at the battle, being kept in my tent at Al Ayadiya* by sickness; but from that place I saw it all. Twice did Al Adil charge the enemy in person this day."

He saw Saladin leading the ranks down as far as the dark line of the Christian trench. He heard a new battle shout:

"Ho! Aid for Islam!"

The waves of cavalry swept against the line of the ditch and the mud wall, and broke up into streamlets of men that plied tiny arrows and dismounted to scramble up the *glacis*, sword in hand. Dust rose over the struggling figures, and other waves of horsemen trotted into the dust, to become little black dots that swarmed forward where the green banners flickered and the drums throbbed ceaselessly.

Al Adil charged, and Taki ad-Din and the dervishes ran between the horses, screaming, knives in lean hands, while the *imams* watching in the hills intoned an endless prayer. "*This day men shall be like scattered moths, and the mountains shall become like flocks of carded wool . . . when the earth with her quakings shall quake, and men shall say, 'What aileth her?' On this day shall she tell out her tidings . . .*"

Moslems were breaking through the trench line; they were wielding their swords among the tents, under that veil of dust. They were leaving their horses and breaking through.

Wounded warriors drifted back, dark with sweat and drying blood, rocking in their saddles and shouting the tale of their deeds while the fever of fighting was in them.

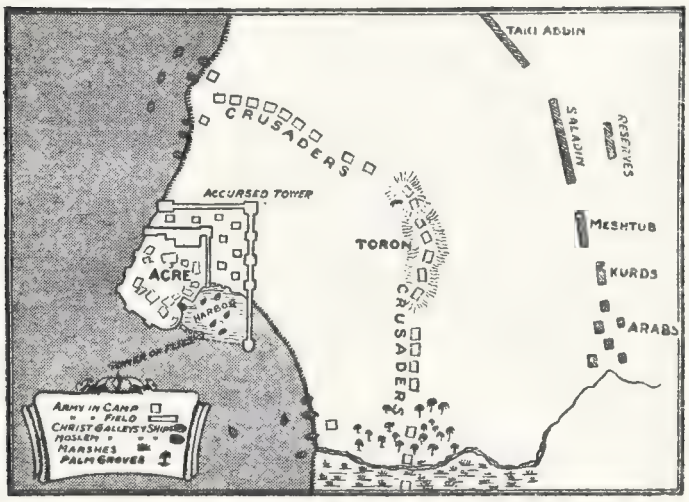
They told of Christian bodies filling the trench, so that the horses could gallop upon them like a bridge.

"A Frank of enormous size mounted the rampart. His comrades passed stones up to him from behind. He cast the stones

*Saladin's camp in the high ground back of Acre.

down upon us. We struck that man with more than fifty blows of arrows and stones, but could not drive him from his work. He stood against us, struggling, until one of our engineers threw a glass pot of naphtha on him and burned him alive."

Baha ad-Din listened to the tales. A veteran of the regular army, an old man and intelligent, came up. He had penetrated through the ditches of the unbelievers.



"Behind their wall," he said, "there was a woman, covered with a green mantle, who kept shooting arrows with a wooden bow. She wounded several of us. She was finally overcome by several men. We killed her and brought her bow to the Sultan. He was amazed at this happening."

Hours passed, and the trench line of the Christians held fast. At twilight the Moslem cavalry withdrew from the battle.

"Not until night," Baha ad-Din relates, "did the Sultan return to his camp, after the last evening prayer. Broken by fatigue, and a prey to grieving, he slept. But it was not a tranquil sleep. At daybreak he ordered the drums beaten again. On all sides the soldiers began to form their squadrons and to take up their old tasks."

Saladin realized that the final test had come. He had launched all the Moslem horsemen from Cairo to the Persia hills against the Crusaders in the Holy Land, and he had redeemed Jerusalem for Islam. Men called him the Victory Bringer. Now, for nearly two years, he had been locked in struggle with new hosts of Christians who had come overseas to fight their way past Acre to Jerusalem. And he had not been able to break the line of their intrenched camp. Month by month they had gnawed their way through the wall of Acre.

Richard of England could endure idleness no more. He ordered his attendants to pick up his pallet and to carry him upon it, out to the battle. They bore it to a knoll in the front line, where a hurdle stood, roofed over with wickerwork. Through an opening in the wicker roof Richard could watch the wall of Acre, and the battered summit of the Accursed Tower at the angle where the English were attacking.

Raising himself on his elbow, the sick king listened to the whir and thud of the great engines and the clang of iron darts —the rending of wood and the clatter of steel weapons. But he could not lie there inactive while the assault went on. Calling for his crossbow—a weapon that he handled with rare skill—he began to speed his quarrels through the opening of the bomb-proof.

That day the English fired the beams of the tunnel they had thrust down under the foundations of the square tower. Smoke oozed up through the holes in the earth. Slowly the tower inclined outward: it settled into the earth and leaned toward the besiegers, but it did not fall.

Richard summoned a herald to him.

"Two gold byzants to the man who brings me a stone from yonder tower!"

he said, and the trumpeter proclaimed it from the knoll beside him.

The men within hearing looked at the leaning tower, still manned by Moslem archers, and hung back. The king offered three and then four gold pieces for a stone, and groups of the English dropped their arms to run forward with iron bars and hammers, under the speeding arrows.

Some of them were shot down, and others fled; but several pried stones from the tower's base and staggered back with them to the king.

At twilight the Accursed Tower still stood. Through the hours of darkness men labored around it like ghouls in a great cemetery of stones. From the Christian lines they crept forward to throw the bodies of their dead comrades into the maw of the half filled *fosse*. Thither they dragged carcasses of horses, beams and rocks. With sword and ax other shadows of men stood guard over them.

Peering into the haze of moonlight, helmeted archers on the broken wall above them shot at the moving shadows. From the yawning breaches of the wall barefoot Moslems, wraiths tortured by hunger and lack of sleep, stole out and felt their way along the darkness of the *fosse*. They carried axes and long knives and when they came to the body of a man or the stiffened cadaver of a horse they hacked at the limbs until they could wrench them off and pass them back to other laborers, who carried their burden back into the alleys of Acre, and cast them into the sea.

So, under the impassive moon, shadows worked to fill up the great ditch, while others toiled to clear it.

The Accursed Tower was down at last, in clouds of smoke and drifting dust. A wide hole gaped in the angle of the gray city wall. And, as ants swarm forth to mend a break in the clay barrier of an ant hill, weary men thronged from the city to tug stones into place, one upon the other—to build a barricade out of dismembered bodies and the broken beams of engines.

While other figures ran into the settling dust, to tear apart the barricade. With them went the banners of Leicester and Chavigny and the good Bishop of Salisbury. Sword in hand they climbed over the stones, smiting and hacking and pressing on. From straining throats came a hoarse cry—

"Christ and the Sepulchre!"

Through the barricade they broke, stumbling and falling under the arrows that sped down from the heights around them. Back to back they stood in the welter of human bodies, their long arms lashing around them. The banners rose in the breach, and the distant watchers shouted—

"St. George for England!"

One figure pushed ahead of the others. A knight, Aubery Clement, had sworn that he would enter Acre or die that day. And he went down under a counter charge of desperate Turks, who fought with knives and broken swords to hold the breach, until others came up with flame throwers.

Sheets of flame licked out at the attackers, and burning naphtha drenched them. Scorched and tortured, men who would have stood their ground against steel, fell back into the débris of the *fosse*, or stumbled clear of the wall. So were the English beaten back from the breach while the tired Turks shouted in mockery.

But it was the last of the fire and almost the last of the garrison's strength.

On Friday, the twentieth of July, a swimmer from the city reached the outer shore and was brought to Saladin, with a letter from the commanders in Acre.

"The letter," Baha ad-Din explains, "showed that the garrison was reduced to its last extremity—too weak to defend the breach which was very great. Only death awaited them, and they did not doubt that all of them would be massacred if the city were carried by assault. So they had made a treaty to surrender the place.

"After reading it Saladin summoned his officers at once to council in the field. When they had talked together, the Sultan called the swimmer again and gave

him a message disapproving the terms of the treaty.

"Saladin left the council without speaking to any one. That night he remained sitting in troubled abstraction, when all at once we saw fires lighted on the wall of the city—and the banners and crosses of the enemy. Their fires of joy lighted all the ramparts."

Acre had fallen.

II

WITH the surrender of the city a change came over the survivors of the Christian host. Under the burning midsummer sun the siege engines were left standing unattended, like captive giants bound with ropes and chains, and now at last permitted to repose in peace. And the men who had labored for months without respite put aside their armor and drank of idleness as a thirst ridden traveler quaffs deep of wine in the cool of the evening.

They took possession of their old quarters in the city, and watched the throng of Moslem prisoners working with brushes and pails of water, scrubbing the whitewash from the walls of the cathedral that had been a mosque. Under the white coating appeared the familiar mosaic figures of the saints, as if they had been waiting there these four years to welcome the Christians.

The great army of Christians felt the relaxation from the strain; it slept fitfully at first and then heavily, dulling the memory of pain and agonising losses. It tried not to think of the graves that covered the plain—graves that held the bodies of three reigning princes, six archbishops and patriarchs, forty counts and five hundred men of noble rank. And perhaps eighty thousand common men.* The price paid for Acre had been too great, but the survivors of the host felt that victory lay with them, and surely now the way was open to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, relaxing, the men who put aside their armor became individuals again, with ambitions and grievances and hopes of their own. The men-at-arms settled old debts and went out to look for taverns. Courtly dress appeared again in the streets, where esquires rode in attendance upon their ladies. Other women came down from Tyre, and of nights the tinkling of gitterns, the clinking of cups and the melody of the troubadours could be heard.

And the leaders assembled in a great council to settle the question of the kingship that had divided them into two factions. No idle question this—for in the hand of the king lay the authority of God.

In this council sat Philip-Augustus in his somber dress, his young face prematurely lined. Beside him the long limbed Richard, in a rose hued vest and hunting cap, his great sword in its plain sheath linked to his girdle with silver. He played with the staff in his hand, alert and amused—eager to have his say in the controversy. Behind him sat the Templars in their white surcoats, and the three brothers Lusignan—Guy the king in name, Geoffrey the warrior, and Amalric the Constable.

With the French were the dark faced Pisans, and the nobleman who had caused the quarrel, Conrad of Montserrat, inscrutable, unyielding and swift to seize upon any gain. He claimed the throne of Jerusalem, in spite of Guy, who had held it before the war.

All remonstrances the ambitious Italian brushed aside. The daring Geoffrey, brother of Guy, cast down his gauntlet before the marquis and Conrad ignored it. The Templars insisted that Guy was the rightful king, but Conrad gained the ear of Philip-Augustus — even persuaded that thoughtful monarch to claim half of Richard's conquest of the rich island of Cyprus. The careless Richard accepted Guy's side of the quarrel. The Crusade had fanned the latent enmity between the two kings and Richard openly

*Accounts of the numbers involved and the losses vary widely. Moslem chroniclers say that 120,000 Christians died at Acre. It is possible—judging from the totals given for the various contingents as they arrived—that 150,000 landed at Acre. From the heavy casualties among the leaders and well known knights, it seems that the losses amounted to one-half the army. Such losses would be the equivalent of a million men today. And they do not include the casualties of the German host in Asia Minor.

sought the leadership of the army.

In the great council the cause was debated gravely, for the kingship of Jerusalem was perhaps the highest of earthly honors.

After the council Philip-Augustus astonished them by announcing that he would leave them. Richard's knight-errantry had exhausted his patience, perhaps, but he longed to take advantage of the death of the Count of Flanders and to have his hand again in affairs at home, while the other princes were at war in the East. Under the excuse of illness, he said that he would sail back to France at once.

Naturally, the French contingents protested, and the other barons urged him to abide until the end of the war. The politic king did consent to leave at Acre the bulk of his soldiers under command of the Duke of Burgundy. He would not stay; and so great was his desire to make haste that he begged two swift galleys from Richard.

No protest came from Richard, although even that single minded warrior scented danger in the wind. Before the high lords he made Philip-Augustus swear that he would keep the faith he had pledged to him and would do no injury to the vassals or the lands of England, while Richard was absent.

The King of France took the oath readily, and broke it as readily before the year was out.

"Instead of blessings," says Ambrose, "maledictions followed him upon his departure."

Be that as it may, Richard Plantagenet was happy. Well and hale once more, with no one to hinder him and all Palestine open to him. Alone Conrad dared question his acts; and Conrad, following a policy of his own, saw fit to retire into his citadel of Tyre, taking with him the Moslem hostages who had fallen to the share of the French king; nor would he emerge at the Lion Heart's summons.

For better or worse Richard became leader of the Crusade. His unbounded energy brought new spirit into the war, and the first result of it was the massacre.

ACRE had surrendered upon hard terms. To save their lives Saladin's generals in the city had agreed to the surrender of the place with all it held, to the payment of a ransom of 200,000 pieces of gold, to the release by Saladin of 1,600 Christian captives—one hundred knights selected by name among them—and to the return of the holy cross.

Saladin had been troubled when he learned the conditions. The fulfilment of course rested with him, since some 3,000 of the garrison with the two commanders were held as hostages by the Crusaders. He had asked what time would be allowed him to make the payment, and had been informed that he would have three months—one-third of the conditions to be met at the end of each month.

Now the first month had elapsed, and the Crusaders were eagerly awaiting the sight of the true cross, taken at the battle of Hattin. Whenever Moslem parties appeared near Acre, men ran out crying—

"The cross is coming!"

But it did not come. Instead Saladin sent a message, explaining that he was ready to meet the first payment if the Christians would give hostages on their part to guarantee that they would release the prisoners at the end. Richard, in refusing this, demanded that Saladin make the payment without any conditions.* Days passed, and no response came from the hills. We do not know what Saladin thought, or what he was preparing to do. Doubtless he distrusted the Crusaders, and probably he was waiting for the arrival of some of the captives.

But there is no doubt as to what Richard did. Calling a council of the princes

* Baha ad-Din, who was in a position to know, but who was naturally prejudiced against the Crusaders, gives the following version of Saladin's response.

"Of two things, do one. Send back to us our comrades (the captives of the garrison) and receive the amount of the payment agreed upon for this term; then we will give you hostages for all that is agreed upon for the following terms. Or accept what we will make over to you today and give us hostages whom we will keep until our comrades, held by you, have been sent out to us."

He says the Frank envoys answered:

"We will do none of that. Pay what is due now, and accept our solemn oath that your people will be returned to you."

in Acre, he discussed the situation, and came to a decision. Twenty-six hundred Moslems of the garrison were led out into the plain to a kind of enclosure of blankets hung upon cords. Their hands were bound and they were put to death by the sword, or hanged—within sight of the Moslem patrols watching from the hills. Of all the hostages only the higher officers were spared.

In a frenzy of anger all the Moslem cavalry within summons rode down at the Crusaders, and before the execution ended swords were clashing all over the plain. Eventually the Moslems withdrew, to carry the tidings to Saladin.

Beyond doubt, he had not expected this. The massacre depressed him deeply, and not for many a long day did he show mercy to any Crusaders taken captive. He did not, however, retaliate by a slaughter of the Christians already in his hands.

Richard's callous act roused intense feeling among the Moslems. By the letter of the agreement he had the right to act as he did. It must be remembered also that the Crusaders were still afflicted by their losses at Acre—that the majority of them, arriving on the coast during the tension of the siege, still looked upon their enemies as infidels to be slaughtered wherever met. Granting this, the fact remains that Richard stained his name and honor by this needless cruelty, and that Saladin did not retaliate except in the open war that followed.

The slaughter had its afternote of comedy. The two Moslem commanders of Acre were held for individual ransom—Meshtub, chieftain of the Kurds, being kept for 8,000 pieces of gold, while Karakush was thought by the Crusaders to be worth 30,000. It occurred to Meshtub to ask the figure set for the ransom of his brother-in-arms, and his captors told him.

"I am worth as much as he," Meshtub protested. "By God, Karakush will not bring thirty thousand pieces if I bring only eight."

The knights laughed, and raised the old Kurd's ransom to 30,000 pieces.

MEANWHILE Richard was preparing to march on Jerusalem. By common consent the Crusaders placed themselves under his orders, although he had only been on the coast for two months. As King of England he was of higher birth than the remaining lords, and the command lay with him by right; but Richard Plantagenet would have taken the lead of any army in which he served.

It is no easy matter to perceive the real Richard, called the Lion Heart. We have only glimpses of him, matching songs with the troubadours of Poitiers, standing silent beside his father's body, without a word of blame or promise of good will to the English barons who had fought against him.

He plunges into the Crusade as if longing to bury all this futile past in a selfless venture; he desires Berengaria of Navarre for wife, and yet sails from Messina on the very eve of her expected arrival. And after their marriage he avoids her—places her with Joanna his sister rescued from Sicily and the fair Byzantine girl, daughter of the Comnene, held by him as hostage.

Seemingly he takes delight in the young Byzantine princess—perhaps makes her his mistress. Berengaria follows him without protest, silent in her pride. The three women—shadows behind the resplendent figure of the Crusader king—are housed with all splendor in the palace at Acre. They appear at banquets, and Richard takes pleasure in gifting them with luminous silks and rare Eastern jewels.

He is no whit dismayed by the losses at Acre or the desertion of Philip. The thing in hand engrosses him, and he exults in the preparations for the march, buying new soldiery from the French, inspecting the ships. He can order the slaying of the Moslem hostages, and still send requests to Saladin for food for his falcons. He is childishly disappointed that the Sultan will not meet him face to face in courteous talk before the coming battle. Passing from hunting field to the banquet table, jesting with men of all

ranks, spurring on the laggards, beating down all opposition—such is the outward bearing of the man, on the eve of the struggle.

At times he is moody, and over-tensed nerves give way before little things. He has a Norman's canniness, and never did Crusader cast such stakes upon the board as Richard. To come thus far, he has drained England, and left all his kingdom at hazard. He means no doubt to win such fortune and glory in the Holy Land that he may return and mend matters in the West. But he finds great powers opposing him at every step, and he is impatient.

So for a moment the two adversaries gather their strength for the coming struggle—the champion of the West preparing to go forth to meet the lord of the nearer East. In every quality they are opposed: Saladin has the clear vision of age, Richard the heedlessness of youth; Saladin is patient, Richard impetuous; Saladin, unable to take part in person in the fighting, relies upon generalship; Richard depends upon his own prowess in battle. The Sultan, a fatalist, will take long chances—he has men fit only for striking, not for defense; the king must feel the ground before each new step, but he has men equally effective in attack or defense.

Either of them would give his life to hold, or to take, Jerusalem.

Richard made the first move—a wise one. Instead of seeking Saladin or marching inland, he started down the coast with the fleet following beside him, toward Jaffa, the port of Jerusalem. A distance of some sixty-five miles as the crow flies, rather more than a hundred along the trails. He set out on August 25th, of that year 1191 during the worst of the heat when the streams were dry.

Saladin kept in touch with his movements by spies and by mounted patrols. He ordered the walls of the three towns between Acre and Jaffa dismantled, and the fortifications of that seaport destroyed. And he marched south beside the Crusaders, out of sight within the hills.

III

AT FIRST the Christian army did not move smoothly. In fact, it did not move at all. Acre sheltered a great multitude, speaking different languages and following different leaders. For weeks the multitude had rested in the shade of the poplars and the palm groves.

"In the town," Ambrose explains, "were good wines and girls, many of whom were very fair. They gave themselves up to the wine and the women until the valiant men were ashamed of the others."

Richard had to pitch his tents by the sand dunes of the river and send back his marshals to rout out the malingerers. They emerged peevishly, overburdened with baggage. And onsets of Moslem cavalry added to the confusion. For two days the Crusaders camped in the shadow of Mount Carmel—from the summit of which Saladin had been inspecting them—while the useless gear was discarded and the men formed into companies.

All women except hardy workers were sent back, and each man was given ten days supplies of biscuit, cereal, wine and meat to carry in a pack. This done, the great standard, an effigy of a dragon mounted upon an iron bound pole in a heavy cart, trundled forward within its guard of Norman swordsmen. With the Templars leading, the army crawled around the point of Carmel in close array.

Ambrose marched with them, delighted at the sight, and he sang of the armed host:

> "You would see there great chivalry,
> The fairest younglings,
> The chosen men, most proud,
> That ever were beheld.
> So many men, all confident,
> So many fine armorings,
> And old sergeants, hardy and proud,
> So many swords fair-seeming,
> So many banners gleaming . . .
> You would see there a host afoot,
> Greatly to be feared."

Burdened by the heavy packs the army trudged through the dry brush and thickets of the shore, surprised to see so many

animals scurrying away before it. Scorpions and snakes worried the newcomers, and every day before setting out the sun emerged from the ridge on the left hand, making a glaring furnace of the sky, reflecting on the sand and even touching the tranquil green sea with fire. The army clambered past the limestone ledges of the Narrow Way, fearing that the Moslems would beset it.

But the sand and the brush lay empty before it, as far as the ruins of Capernaum. The army advanced only a few miles each day, halting at an early hour to camp. When the men had eaten supper, and the sun had sunk beneath red clouds into a purple sea, the air became cool and they could sit at ease. Then one would arise, and call out the familiar words—

"Holy Sepulchre, aid us!"

Others would take up the cry after him, repeating it as far as the outer lines where the silent Templars kept watch in mounted patrols. Ambrose said it refreshed them all—as did the sight of the stalwart Richard by day, mounted on his bay Cyprian horse Fauvel.

The army trudged on, down the silent coast where no sheep grazed, and no wind stirred the dust, and even the thickets were gray and salt and bitter. At the empty town of Caesaria the fleet appeared, moving slowly under listless airs over the tideless water. It brought supplies and the last laggards from Acre.

"The army," a chronicle relates, "pitched its tents by a river called the River of Crocodiles, because the crocodiles devoured two soldiers who bathed in it. Caesaria is great in size, and the buildings wonderful in workmanship. Our Saviour with His disciples often visited it and worked miracles there. But the Turks had broken down part of the towers and walls."

Here the army turned a little inland—for the line of the menacing hills had receded, and the leaders decided to follow the wells and cultivated land a few miles from the shore.

"And here," Baha ad-Din relates, "Saladin made a survey of the country ahead of the Crusaders and talked for a long time apart with his brother, Al Adil."

On leaving Caesaria the Moslem cavalry appeared, skirmishing with the rear guard and harassing the Crusaders with arrows. But Richard or his advisers had hit upon a formation that fairly baffled the eager foeman.

THE CRUSADERS marched in three columns. The one nearest the hills—and the Moslems—was formed entirely of infantry, in close order. Those in the outer files exposed to the Moslem arrows carried bows and crossbows and wore shirts of felt and mail. They worked their bows without halting, and their armor shielded them from the hostile arrows. Within these files, their comrades carried spears and swords in readiness to stand and beat off a charge.

The second column, within the infantry screen, was made up of the knights and horsemen, the real strength of the army—protected in this fashion from the arrows that would otherwise have taken toll of the valuable mounts.

Nearest the sea and remote from the Moslems marched the third column with the carts and baggage and the sick. These men could take their ease, and a division of them changed places every few hours with the infantry of the first column, who could then rest in their turn.

The fighting of the first day ended at noon when both sides wilted under the trying heat. The Crusaders kept on, across a barren stretch of sand dunes and came to a narrow ravine, a portion of which the Moslems had thoughtfully camouflaged with a screen of branches to trap the horsemen of the advance. But the Templars were not deceived, and after testing the water and finding it good, they camped there. The river they christened the Dead River.

"On the next day," the chronicle continues, "the army went on slowly through a desolate country. The Templars had charge of the rear that day and they lost so many horses through the attacks of the

Turks, they were almost reduced to despair. The king also was wounded in the side by a javelin while he was driving the Turks. Alas, how many horses fell pierced with javelins! This terrible tempest kept up all day, until at twilight the Turks returned to their tents.

"Our people stopped near what was called the Salt River. A great throng gathered on account of the horses which had died from their wounds, for the people were so eager to purchase the horseflesh that they even came to blows. The king, hearing this, proclaimed by herald that he would give a live horse to whoever had lost his horse and who distributed the flesh of it to the best men in his command, who had most need of it.

"On the third day our army marched in battle array from the Salt River; for there was a rumor that the Turks were lying in ambush in a forest, and that they meant to set the brush on fire. But our men, advancing in order, passed the place unmolested where the ambuscade was said to be. On quitting the wood they came to a large plain and there they pitched their tents. Spies, however, brought back word that the Turks lay ahead of them in countless numbers."

Saladin had inspected this plain with Al Adil, and had chosen it for the hazard of battle. In the last two days his horsemen had tried to coax the Crusaders' cavalry out of the protecting mass of infantry, and had failed.

"We had to admire," Baha ad-Din says, "the patience shown by these people, who endured the worst fatigues without having military skill or any advantage on their side."

The Moslems, being all mounted, outnumbered the Crusaders' horsemen at least five to one. Their purpose was to induce the men of the cross to break their array—to abandon the hedgehog-like formation and to scatter over the countryside, in which case the charges of the Turkish cavalry might overwhelm them. Richard, understanding this peril, had ordered his men not to move out of ranks under any provocation unless the signal was given to charge—the simultaneous blast of trumpets down the line.

So on that day of battle the Christians moved forward in their dense column, like an armored giant drawing himself painfully over the ground, heedless of the sting of missiles.

The Templars took the advance again, followed by the Bretons and the knights of Anjou; King Guy led the men of Poitou at their heels, and the Normans and English pressed after with the standard. Bearing the burden of the attack, the black robed Hospitallers held the rear. At nine o'clock, when the Crusaders were already drenched with sweat, the two sides were engaged—swarms of Bedawins and the negro horsemen of Egypt assailing the rear.

King Richard and the Duke of Burgundy with their retinues rode up and down the line, to steady the men.

"THE ENEMY," relates the chronicler de Vinsauf, "thundered at their backs as if with mallets, so that, having no room to use their bows, they fought hand to hand, and the blows of the Turks, echoing from their metal armor, resounded as if they had struck upon an anvil. They were now tormented with the heat, and no rest was allowed them. The battle fell heavily on the extreme line of the Hospitallers—the more so as they were unable to resist.

"They moved forward with patience under their wounds, and the Turks cried out that they were iron, and would yield to no blow. Then about twenty thousand Turks rushed upon our men. Almost overcome by their savage fury Garnier de Napes, one of the Hospitallers, suddenly exclaimed with a loud voice—

" 'O St. George, wilt thou leave us to be driven thus?'

"Upon this the master of the Hospitallers went to the king and said to him, 'My Lord the King, we are pressed by the enemy, and in danger of eternal infamy; we are losing our horses, one after the other, and why should we bear with them?'

"'Good Master,' the king replied, 'it is you who must sustain their attack. No one can be everywhere at once.'

"On the master returning, there was not a count or prince who did not blush for shame, and they said one to the other, 'Why do we not charge them at full gallop?'

"Thereupon two knights who were impatient of delay, put everything in confusion. They rushed at full gallop upon the Turks and each of them overthrew his man, by piercing him with his lance. One of them was the Marshal of the Hospitallers, the other was Baldwin de Carreo, a good and brave man and the companion of King Richard.*

"When the other Christians observed these two rushing forward, and heard them calling with clear voices on St. George for aid, they charged the Turks in a body with all their strength; then the Hospitallers, who had been distressed all day by their close array, following the two soldiers, charged the enemy in troops —so that the van of the army became the rear and the Hospitallers who had been the last, became the first.

"The Count of Champagne also burst forward with his chosen company, and James d'Avesnes with his kinsmen, and the Bishop of Beauvais, as well as the Earl of Leicester, who made a fierce charge on the left, toward the sea. The Turks, who had dismounted from their horses in order to take better aim at our men with their javelins and arrows, were slain on all sides in that charge, for, being overthrown by the horsemen, they were killed by the footmen who followed.

"King Richard, on seeing his army in motion, flew on his horse through the Hospitallers, and broke into the Turkish infantry, who were astonished at his blows and those of his men, and gave way to the right and the left. Then might be seen numbers prostrate on the ground, horses and swarms without their riders, and many trodden under foot by friend and foe. Oh, how different is battle from the speculations of those who meditate amid the columns of the cloisters!

"There the fierce king, the extraordinary king cut down the Turks; wherever he turned, he cut a wide path for himself, like a reaper with his sickle. The rest, warned by the sight, gave him wide room.

"For a long time the battle was doubtful. Oh, how many banners might be seen, torn and fallen to the earth; how many swords of proved steel covering the ground! Some of the Turks hid themselves in copses, others climbed the trees and, being shot with arrows, fell with a groan to the earth; others, abandoning their horses, betook themselves to slippery footpaths. For a space of two miles nothing could be seen but fugitives.

"Our men paused, but the fugitives to the number of twenty thousand when they saw this, recovered their courage and charged the hindmost of our men who were retiring. Oh, how dreadfully were our men then pressed! They bent, stunned, to their saddle bows. Then you might have seen horses without saddles, and the Turks returning upon our people.

"The commander of the Turks was an Admiral†—Tekedmus, a kinsman of the Sultan; he had seven hundred Turks of great valor from the household troops of Saladin, each of whose companies bore a yellow banner. These men, coming at full charge with haughty bearing, attacked our men so that even the firmness of our leaders wavered under the weight of the pressure. The battle raged fiercer than before—the one side labored to crush, the other to repel.

"For all that, the king, mounted on a bay Cyprian steed, scattered those he met, while helmets tottered beneath his sword. The enemy gave way before his sword, and thus our men, having suffered somewhat, returned to the standard.

"They proceeded on their march as far as Arsur, and there they pitched their tents outside its wall. While they were

*Baha ad-Din saw this charge. "The enemy found himself more and more entangled, and the Moslems became expectant of victory. Then their cavalry formed in a mass, and knowing that nothing could save them but a mighty effort, they charged . . . I saw, myself, these horsemen gathered in the circle formed by the infantry; all at once they seized their lances and gave a great war shout; the line of infantry opened to let them pass, and they cast themselves forward."

†An amir—probably Taki ad-Din.

thus engaged, a large body of the Turks made an attack upon the extreme rear of our army. King Richard with only fifteen companions rushed against these Turks, crying out in a loud voice—

"'Aid us, O Sepulchre!'

"When our men heard it they made haste to follow him, and attacked the Turks, putting them to flight.

"Overcome with the fatigues of the day, our men rested quietly that night. Whoever wished to plunder returned to the field of battle, and those who returned thence reported that they had counted thirty-two Turkish chieftains slain. The Turks also made search for them.

"But we had to mourn greatly the loss of James d'Avesnes. On Sunday the Hospitallers and knights of the Temple armed themselves and made anxious search, and at last found the body, its face so covered with clotted blood that it was difficult of recognition. Thus, having decently wrapped up the body, they bore it back to Asur whence a great multitude of the soldiers came forth to meet it."

SO ENDED Saladin's attempt to break the array of the Crusaders in open battle. The sallying forth of two knights against Richard's orders took the Moslems by surprise, and the charge of the Christian chivalry swept all the Moslem divisions back against the hills with heavy losses. In this charge the men of Islam experienced for the first time the astonishing might of the Lion Heart, and *Malik Ric* gained for himself a place in Moslem legendry that endures even today.

But counter charges led by Taki ad-Din and others made the Crusaders retire into their close order, and move on without delay to the sheltering gardens of the little seaport of Arsuf. On the following day Saladin appeared, ready to renew the action, while the Crusaders did not take the field.

This affair of Arsuf was hardly a battle, and certainly not a decisive battle, as some historians have made it out, in the past. It did prove, however, that the Crusaders under Richard's leadership could hold their own in ranged battle against Saladin's forces, and it lowered the morale of the Moslem soldiery. And it caused Saladin and his generals to change their plan of campaign. Instead of hanging on the flank of the Christians to draw them into action, Saladin retired to the line of the hills and divided his forces, determined to play for time.

To do this he destroyed instead of defending Ascalon, the Bride of Syria. Ascalon, the southern key to Jerusalem and to the caravan route into Egypt, was a great and fair seaport, but the Moslem amirs were in no mood to shut themselves up in another Acre, to defend it.

"I take God to witness," Saladin said, "I would rather lose all my children than cast down a stone from its walls, but—it is necessary."

He drove his men to the grim work, recruiting an army of workmen.

"When these laborers entered the city," Baha ad-Din relates, "there went up a great sound of grieving; for the city was pleasant to look upon; its walls were strong, its houses beautiful. Its people began at once to sell everything they could not bear away with them into Egypt, even selling ten hens for one dirhem. They came out to the camp with their wives and children, to sell their household things. Some had to go off on foot, lacking money to hire beasts to carry them. The troops, worn out with fatigue, spent that night in their tents. This was a horrible time.

"From early morning the Sultan busied himself in the work of tearing down. He gave all the corn stored in the city to the workmen. They set fire to the houses of the city. All the towers were filled with wood and burned.

"For two days the Sultan was so ill that he could not ride or take any food. He shifted the camp close to the walls, which enabled the camel and ass drivers to share in the work. For he feared that the Franks would hear of it and come down to forestall him."

IV

RICHARD'S impetuous spirit was fired by the withdrawal of the Moslems.

"Seigneurs," he cried in the first conference at Jaffa, "the Turks are destroying Ascalon—they dare not give battle to us. Let us go, to save this city."

But they did not go. The banners were planted in the olive groves, swept by the dry north wind. The horses grazed hungrily in the fertile fields by the canals, and the men ate eagerly of the ripe grapes and fresh figs and almonds. They rested, in Jaffa—some of them even went by boat to the fleshpots of Acre—and debated what ought to be done. It seemed to them that the wall of Jaffa must be repaired first.

And Richard, so skilled in battle, so certain of himself in the face of the enemy, could not sway the minds of the council. Impatiently his thoughts turned to the great leaders of the Moslems, off yonder behind the haze of dust that half veiled the brown rampart of the hills. He sent an envoy for Al Adil, the counselor and brother of the Sultan. Al Adil came, courteous and watchful, at the head of a brilliant cortège of horsemen. Richard rode out to meet him, attended by Norman knights, with youthful Humphrey of Toron to interpret for him.

"The war," he said, "has lasted a long time between us. On both sides a multitude of brave warriors have fallen. As for us, we are come only to aid the Franks of this coast. Make peace with them, and the two armies will retire, each into its own country."

Al Adil was apt at this fencing with words. Quietly he demanded upon what terms the Christians would make peace, and Richard, perforce, answered, saying that Jerusalem must be yielded up, and the Moslems must retire beyond the Jordan. With pride, Al Adil refused.

This meeting was reported at once to Saladin, and he wrote to his brother, "Try to drag out matters longer with the Franks and keep them where they are, until the Turkoman reenforcements which are on the way have joined us."

So Al Adil summoned again by the English king, brought a great pavilion with him, and gifts of camels and saddled horses, and his cooks with a store of dainties. Not to be outdone in courtesy, Richard ordered forward his own tent, and the two feasted therein—the Moslem cooks fetching their dishes into the Crusader's quarters. Richard prepared the feast with splendor and returned gift for gift.

Quite frankly he admired Al Adil, finding that this lord of the pagans who could tell a merry tale, or eat a whole sheep at a sitting, knew all the lore of hunt and falconry—that his pride was not less than Norman pride. Such a man could entertain the Lion Heart more than the wayward French barons, or the monkish Templars who labored at the stones of Jaffa. Thereafter Richard often sent to the Moslem chieftain for sherbet or—when fever settled upon him—snow from the distant peak of Hermon. Always Al Adil responded courteously, while he studied Richard.

Months later Richard was to make a friendly gesture in recognition of Al Adil's courtesy.* He sent for the elder son of the Moslem prince and knighted him with all solemnity before the Christian lords. For the present, however, his restless mind played with a new project that fairly took Al Adil's breath away.

It seemed to the English king that a marriage might mend all the questions at issue—the marriage of his sister Joanna to the cultured and affable Al Adil. This done, he—on behalf of the Crusaders—and Saladin—on behalf of the Moslems, would surrender their mutual holdings in the Holy Land to the new couple and Jerusalem would be held in peace by both sides, with pilgrims at liberty to come and go. The true cross would be returned to the Crusaders.

*The incident in Scott's novel, of Saladin's visit in the disguise of a physician to Richard's tent is, of course, fiction, as it was meant to be. The king and the Sultan never met, in truce or in the field of battle. There is no evidence that Saladin sent his physician to minister to the English king, but he did send gifts of fruit and snow during Richard's illness.

So Richard suggested, apparently with all sincerity. Al Adil was a little dazzled when he reported the offer to his brother.

"Wilt thou accept?" Baha ad-Din asked the Sultan curiously.

"Yes, verily," Saladin said, thrice—and smiled.

He knew the thing to be impossible, and eventually Richard had to announce that his sister refused to marry a Moslem.

NOT THAT Richard was idle. The skirmishing going on between the horsemen of both sides gave full opportunity for the individual combats that delighted him. He went out with a small following to look for hostile patrols and ride them down.

"The King of England," Ambrose explains, "went out to meet the Saracens, hoping to surprise them, but once the thing turned out badly. The king had too few with him, and it happened that he went to sleep.

"The Saracens were on their guard, and approached so near that he was barely awakened in time. Seigneurs, do not be surprised if he got up in great haste—for a single man beset by so many is not at ease. But the grace of God enabled him to mount his horse; his people mounted also, but they were too few. When the Turks saw them in the saddle they turned and fled to their ambuscade, pursued by the king. Those who were hidden in the ambush rushed out and tried to seize the king upon his horse Fauvel, but he drew his sword.

"All around him the Turks pressed—each one wishing to put hand on him but no one wishing to feel the blow of his sword. If they had known who he was, they would have taken him. But one of his knights, William of Priux, a loyal man and proud, cried out, 'I am the *malik*.' That is to say, the king. The Turks seized him at once and carried him off to their army.

"There were killed Renier de Maron, who had a valiant heart, and his nephew. Alan and Lucas of the Stable were killed also—that is the truth. No one pursued the Turks, for they went away in a great body, leading William a captive.

"When God had thus spared the king, several, knowing his courage and being fearful for him, begged of him:

" 'Sire, for God, do not thus! It is not your affair to go on such expeditions. You lack not brave men—do not go forth alone on such occasions, for all our lives depend upon you.'

"More than one valiant man took pain to beseech him. But he, when he heard of a combat—and very little could be hidden from him—he cast himself always against the Turks.

"Once the Templars were guarding the foragers, when four squadrons of Turks fell upon them with loose bridles. The combat was at its height when King Richard arrived. He saw our people surrounded by the pagans. He had only a few with him, but valiant men and chosen, several of whom said to him:

" 'In truth, Sire, you risk a great misfortune. Never can you bring our people out of there, and it is better that they die than that you perish with them.'

"The king changed color, and said, 'I have sent them thither—I asked them to go. If they die there without me, may I never again be called king!'

"He gave his horse the spurs and loosened the rein; swifter than a hawk he cast himself at the Saracens, and broke through them to the center. He drove them back, returning on his track to strike them again, severing their heads and arms. They fled like beasts. Many who could not flee were taken or killed. Our men pursued them until it was the hour to return to camp.

"Some men, however, blamed Richard because of the presents he had accepted from the pagans. But he would have delived the Holy Land if he had not been prevented."

October had passed, and November, while Jaffa was rebuilt and fresh contingents summoned up from Acre. The orange groves around Jaffa were heavy with fruit, and the feather grass blew

brittle over the plain, under cloudy skies. Along the line of the hills the dust veil whirled when the north wind blew.

Little by little the Crusaders had penetrated the plain, quartering themselves in dismantled towers and riding into the empty towns. They had gained the edge of the foothills, and before them the road to Jerusalem ascended among barren gullies, twisting and turning around the shoulders of the hills toward the Holy City, hidden from sight twelve miles distant.

But they had delayed too long. Rain came on the heels of the wind, and chilled the air. The bulk of the Crusaders expected to march forward to Jerusalem, while the leaders, realizing the difficulties, had no plan at all, and Richard could not think of one.

"The days became cold," Ambrose relates, "the rain and the hail beat against us, overturning our tents. We lost there, before and after Christmas, many of our horses, while the storm rotted our salt pork and melted the biscuits. The shirts of mail were covered with rust, and many of us fell ill from lack of food.

"But their hearts were joyous because of the hope they had, of going to the Holy Sepulchre. Those who were sick at Jaffa and other places had themselves placed in litters and brought out to the camp. And in the camp gladness reigned —they lifted their helmets and tossed their heads, crying:

"'Our Lady, holy Virgin, Mary, aid us! O Lord, allow us to worship and thank Thee, and to see Thy Sepulchre!'

"Yet the high men and the captains decided that every one must go back to Ascalon, and rebuild its walls.*

"When the news was known in the host, no one ever saw a host so troubled and so sad. Their joy—when they had thought to go to the Sepulchre—was not so great as this new grief. Some of them could not hold their peace, and cursed the long halt and the camp. All the host was discouraged. They did not know how to carry back the supplies they had brought thither, because the pack animals were enfeebled by the cold and storms. When they were loaded they fell on their knees, and men cursed them, consigning them to the devil. Finally every one departed and that next day we arrived at Ramlah.

"At Ramlah was the host, and because of the discouragement, it separated. Many of the French went away, with the Duke of Burgundy. The king with his nephew the count Henry of Champagne went on to Ibelin. The next day was worse than the one before. A little after midday they reached Ascalon, which they found broken down and destroyed—they had to climb over débris to enter it.

"Saladin knew by his spies that our people had returned to the shore of the sea; then he said to his Saracens that they could go away to their country and rest until May. They went willingly, having remained four whole years in Syria."

ALTHOUGH Richard labored at rebuilding Jaffa, the first weeks of the new year 1192 saw the Crusaders thoroughly disorganized. The French, their supplies and money exhausted, besought the English king for a loan; the Duke of Burgundy went from Richard's side to talk with Conrad, who was secretly negotiating with Saladin—offering to make open war on Richard if the Sultan would pledge him more of the coast cities. The Normans and English mocked the French, saying that they held wine goblets instead of swords in their hands, and that they filled the houses of the prostitutes in Acre so that their comrades had to break down the doors to get in.

The Genoese and Pisans started a war of their own on the streets of Acre, pulling the duke from his horse when he tried to intervene. Richard rode in haste up to the rioting, and managed to bring some order out of chaos.

He assembled all the captains in con-

*The army was in no condition to undertake the siege of Jerusalem in the face of Saladin's forces, during the rains. No such siege had been contemplated by the leaders, although the French urged it. The camp had been pushed forward into the foothills to gratify the mass of the Crusaders who were impatient to see Jerusalem, but this halfway measure only resulted in general discouragement.

By the king, Ambrose means Richard.

ference, and listened to their grievances. And he had to taste the dregs of his own failure to lead them. Because they explained that they were weary of delay and of the figurehead of Guy, who could never be a king in deed; they thought the only man who could make head against the Moslems was Conrad of Montserrat. They wanted Conrad to bring the factions together, and to lead them as King of Jerusalem. So they pleaded, on their knees.

In silence Richard heard them. Like a bird of ill omen word had come to him over the sea from England. The prior of Hereford had brought him a letter from William, Bishop of Ely, and he knew that his affairs in England went badly. His brother, the Earl John, had driven out his chancellor and seized upon the exchequer.

He listened to the Crusaders, and dismissed from his mind his own quarrel with Conrad, giving his assent to the election of Conrad and the retirement of Guy. To compensate the unhappy Lusignan, Richard made over to him the island of Cyprus.

Messengers were sent to Tyre to announce the decision of the council, while the Crusaders rejoiced, making ready their scant robes of ceremony and furbishing their arms for the coming coronation. But their rejoicing was silenced within a few days, when a strange power from beyond the mountains intervened in their affairs.

Conrad, riding home from a banquet at the house of the Bishop of Beauvais, was attacked by two young men without cloaks, and stabbed.

The murderers were seized before they could flee. Soon their identity was established—they belonged to one of the secret orders of Islam, the Assassins. Their master, known to the Crusaders as the Old Man of the Mountain, had his headquarters in Alamut—the Eagle's Nest—within the eastern mountains. Invisible and remote, this Lord of the Portals of Death, as the Arabs called him, ruled over a miniature paradise in his hills. Inflamed by *hashish*, his youthful agents carried their daggers into the courts of neighboring princes; and by the fear they inspired they won obedience for their master.

Once they had menaced Saladin, who defied them, and now they struck down the marquis before his coronation. In the general consternation many tales were repeated of his death, but the account of the Syrian scholar, Abulfarag, written years later, is the clearest.

"Two men of the Ismailites clad in the habit of monks rushed upon the marquis who was mounted on his horse. One of them struck him with a knife; the other fled into a church, nearby. In truth, the wounded marquis was carried into this same church by his companions. When the monk who was the companion of the assassin beheld the marquis alive and speaking, he rushed out at him in the middle of the church and struck him again, and straightway he died.

"These two Ismailites, seized and crucified and tortured by the Franks, said that the King of England had sent them. And because of the enmity which had been between them, the Franks believed the words of these cutthroats. However, it was manifest afterward that the Sidna, chief of the Ismailites, sent them."*

The death of Conrad—the one man Saladin feared—healed the long feud that had divided the Crusaders. At Tyre the French called upon Henry of Champagne to take the kingship of Jerusalem.

Far in the south, Richard heard the

*The Assassins were also called Ismailites. Sidna means simply "our lord" and was one of the general titles of the master of the Assassins. Histories have devoted many pages to the charge that Richard instigated the murder of Conrad. He was accused of it when he was taken prisoner later in Austria. Even so distinguished a scholar as von Hammer argues that Richard was guilty.

Baha ad-Din and other Moslems after him say that Richard caused the murder. But Baha ad-Din clearly is repeating the gossip of the camps at the time. The statement of the two *fedawis*, the murderers, under torture is no evidence, and the curious forged letter that appeared later—supposed to have been written by the master of the Assassins to absolve Richard—is meaningless.

On the other hand, such a murder would have been utterly out of keeping with Richard's character. There is no indication that he was ever near the country of the Assassins, or that he had any dealings with them. The charge laid against him is without evidence to support it.

Conrad is supposed to have come into conflict with the master of the Assassins, who was a distant neighbor. The marquis was scheming at the time to get possession of Beirut and Tripoli, two ports near the Assassins' strongholds, and his election to the kinship would have made him a formidable enemy of the order. There is no reason to doubt the truth of the summing up by Abulfarag, quoted above.

news of Conrad's assassination while he was boar hunting, and for a space he was silent in astonishment.

"Sir Sergeant, this is my word. Let Count Henry take the city of Acre and Tyre," he said at length, "and the whole of the land, if it please God, forever. But tell the count in my name to take the field as speedily as possible and bring the French with him."

And the English king, determined but irresolute as always when the responsibility of a campaign was laid upon him, bethought him of sending envoys to Saladin.

"Greet the Sultan," he instructed his messengers, "and say that the Moslems and the Franks are reduced to the last extremity, and the resources of the two sides in men and material are exhausted.

"As for Jerusalem, we are determined never to give it up, so long as a single man remains to us. You must return the land to us as far as the Jordan. As for the sacred cross, to you it is a bit of wood without value; but in our eyes it has a very great value. Will the Sultan have the graciousness to send it back to us?"

After consulting with his amirs, Saladin answered:

"Jerusalem is as much to us as it is to you, and has more value in our eyes—for it was the place of the Prophet's night journey to Heaven and will provide the place of assembly for our people at the Judgment Day. Do not think that we will give it up to you. The land was ours in the first place, and it is you who have come to attack it.

"If you were able to take it once, that was only by surprise and owing to the weakness of the Moslems who held it then. So long as the war will last, God will not permit you to raise stone upon stone there. As for the cross, its possession is a great advantage to us, and we can not give it up except for some gain to Islam."

And to his officers the old Sultan spoke emphatically:

"If we make peace with these people down there, nothing will guarantee us against their bad faith. If I were to die, it would be difficult to get together such an army as this again. The best thing to do is to carry on the holy war until we have driven them out of the shore or until we are struck down by death."

V

SUMMER came again to the Holy Land. Green were the foothills, where the sentinel poplars stood. Clear the streams that wound between dark cedars and shining rims of marl and red sandstone, down to the lush grass. The herds fattened upon the good grazing and only the figures of the men, alert in their watching, were somber and intent upon the task of war that had been begun long since by forgotten grandsires, but had not yet been finished in this quiet land.

It had become a part of them, as it had been a part of the vanished men of Antioch, and the ghosts of Hattin. It gathered them in the shadow of the high walls and sent them forth at night where no roads led.

Down in the plain the Crusaders said, one man to the other, that a miracle had taken place in the Sepulchre that Eastertide. Saladin had come to the Sepulchre, to sit before the darkened tomb where the dark lamps hung—and a hand invisible had lighted the lamps before the eyes of the Moslems. Surely the lighting of the lamps had been a sign and a portent.

Along the plain rode King Richard and his men. They stormed the fort of Darum, and slew every Moslem within the walls. They rode on, to the gardens of Gaza, among the sand dunes. But there were whispers of messengers that summoned him home across the sea. His followers talked of a wrongdoing in England, of a mutual concession between the Earl John and King Philip by which he would lose England. Some said that he would go away, and others said that he would remain in the Holy Land to the end of the war.

The Crusaders talked among them-

selves and agreed that, if he went, they would still go on to Jerusalem. They rejoiced at that. Only the king was troubled by his thoughts. He meditated apart from his men, and flung himself alone upon his cot when his tent was pitched. At such a time one William of Poitou, a chaplain, beheld him. The chaplain walked back and forth before the tent entrance, not daring to speak to him, but weeping.

The king called him in and spoke.

"By thy faith, what grief makes thee weep?"

"Sire," said the priest, "will you pledge me that you will not be angered if I speak?"

Richard pledged his word, and the chaplain mustered his courage.

"Sire, they blame you. Through the host runs the rumor of your return. May the day never come in which you will leave us. O King, remember what God hath done for you—for no king of this time hath suffered less harm. Remember when you were Count of Poitou, there was no neighbor so powerful your arm did not overthrow him. Remember the Brabaçons you discomforted so often, and that good adventure at Hautefort when the Count of St. Gilles besieged it.

"Remember how your kingdom came to you without need of shield or helmet, and how you stormed the city of Messina, and that fine exploit at Cyprus when you put an emperor in chains—and the capture of Acre. How often hath God aided you? Think well, O King, and protect this land of God. All of those who love you say that if you leave it without aid, it will be lost and betrayed."

Silence fell upon the tent, for those in attendance upon Richard dared not open their lips, and the king uttered no word. Chin on hand, the red haired king meditated, and the chaplain stole away. The next day the Lion Heart summoned his herald, and bade him go through the host, before the gates of Ascalon and proclaim that for no earthly quarrel or any urging would King Richard leave the Holy Land until the coming Easter. And that all should make ready to march on Jerusalem.

And the host exulted, tumultuous as birds at the dawning of day.

"Now, we shall see the Sepulchre!" men said.

The great lords hastened to put their equipment in order, and the small folk made up packs holding a month's provisions. A long column set out upon the road, and through the dust helmets gleamed above the shields emblazoned with devices of lions or flying dragons. The marching men made haste to Blanche Garde and the ruined Toron of the Knights, to the foothills and hamlets of Beth Nable where they were joined by the French, at the mouth of the ravine through which winds the road to Jerusalem.

Perforce they halted there, for the Moslem cavalry beset their patrols and attacked the baggage trains coming up from the coast. While the Earl of Leicester and the French engaged the enemy horsemen, the host set to work shaping timbers for siege engines. But Richard found something else to do.

INTO the camp at Beth Nable rode three men in Turkish dress—three men born in Syria and speaking the language like Moslems. They were the king's spies and they had come from Egypt with news. The first great caravan of the summer was on its way from Cairo into the East. They had watched it winding, an endless stream of camels bound nose to tail, of mounted warriors and laden donkeys—whole families with slaves and goods moving slowly across the dunes of the Jifar, circling far from Ascalon. Thousands of laden beasts, hundreds of armed men, forging along the desert road down to the Dead Sea. By now they would be passing through the bare spurs of the hills south of Hebron.

Richard lost not an hour in setting out. Choosing a thousand riders and another thousand men-at-arms to sit the crupers behind them, he mounted Fauvel that evening and headed south. A full

moon climbed over the bulwark of the hills, and for awhile they rode in the shadow of the heights with a haze of light on the plain beside them. Solitary watch towers gleamed white above them.

But they had been seen. Moslem couriers galloped to Saladin, and the Sultan ordered an escort to hasten down to warn the men of the caravan and to lead it away from the trail out into the blind breast of the desert. His officers outstripped the Crusaders, without sighting them—since they lay hidden in the ruined walls of a town during the next day—and reached the caravan.

But, with no danger in view, the Moslems of the caravan were reluctant to leave the road and its wells. At the end of the afternoon they camped by the well of El Khuweilfa, where the beasts were watered—the escort of warriors going out to pitch their tents a little in advance of the multitude of the caravan that surrounded the well.

At Khuweilfa there was a cistern beside the well, but even with that, it took long hours to water several thousand animals, and the caravan lay passive after its commander gave orders that no one was to start until the following morning.

All this was related to Richard by some friendly Bedawins who had come to the ruined town with their tidings, that evening. The English king thought they were lying, but he decided to go to see for himself. Taking some Turcoples for his only guard, and putting on an Arab headcloth, rings and *khufieh*, he bade the Bedawins lead the way to the well.*

Cutting across the hills and riding swiftly, avoiding the watch towers on the trails, they drew near El Khuweilfa after dark but before the rising of the moon. They reined in their horses and went forward slowly, and almost at once they were challenged by Arabs on a hillock.

The Bedawins motioned Richard to be silent, and one of them answered the outpost.

"We went toward Ascalon to see if it was God's will that we should find plunder. Now, we go back to our place."

"Nay," cried the voice from the darkness, "ye have come out to look at us—and your place is with the King of England."

"*Y'allah!*" the Bedawin swore. "That is a lie."

They did not check their horses, moving on toward the black shape of the caravan. Several men mounted and rode after them, but lost them in the darkness wherein scores of figures moved around the animals. Richard and his companions walked their horses around the bivouac, until they made certain of the size and situation of the encampment. Then they hastened back to the Crusaders.

The raiders fed their horses and ate a little themselves; in the clear moonlight they made their way out of the hills, approaching El Khuweilfa in the murk before dawn. This was an hour that warmed Richard's heart. He divided his men into companies, bade the French follow on his heels, and the foot soldiers follow the knights. His herald went among them, warning the dark groups not to pause for any plundering.

Headlong they charged into the first tents, which happened to be those of the armed escort, not the caravan.

Egyptians and soldiers alike tumbled out of their sleeping robes and ran for their horses, to be cut down by the long swords of the knights. Some of them were able to saddle their beasts, and drew off toward a height where they held their ground.

Meanwhile it grew light and the Crusaders sighted the main caravan, turning their attention to it at once. The plain became a chaos of swerving horses and running men, frightened camels staggering up roaring, and women screaming. Rich-

*Ambrose does not say that Richard went with the Turcoples, but Baha ad-Din, who heard the stories of the survivors of the caravan, is quite clear that he did.

"When this was reported by some Arabs to the King of England he did not believe it, but he mounted and set out with the Arabs and a small escort. When he came up to the caravan, he disguised himself as an Arab and went all around it. When he saw that quiet reigned in their camp and that every one was fast asleep, he returned and ordered his men into the saddle."

Ambrose and de Vinsouf give the incident of the challenge by Moslem sentries.

ard's Bedawins snatched loot by the armful and the drivers joined forces with them.

Through the mad confusion moved the armored forms of the great English lords, the Earl of Leicester and the knights of Anjou—for the fighting went on stubbornly until the sun rose and the mounted Moslems withdrew. They managed to take away under the eyes of the Crusaders two portions of the great caravan that had camped elsewhere.

But the raiders found wealth under their hands.

Countless mule loads of spice and chests of gold and silver, with rolls of brocade; stands of weapons and any amount of pavilions and fine cloths they seized.

They counted more than four thousand camels, and as many horses, and investigation yielded rare things indeed—suits of silvered mail, and chessboards, medicines and silver dishes. Most welcome of all was the great stock of provisions barley, grain and sugar.

They took five hundred prisoners, and made them lead away the heavy laden animals.

When they returned to the army at Beth Nable they were greeted joyfully, but they heard ominous tidings. Spies reported that the Moslems had destroyed all the wells and filled up the springs around Jerusalem.

All the exultation of the raid left Richard, hemmed in again by these multitudes of men praying to be led toward Jerusalem, while the grim Templars shook their heads. He fell moody again, watching through the hours of the nights when the sluggish face of the moon reared above the black ravine, and the cool night air stirred. Up yonder hidden eyes watched in the shadows and death lay in wait. Up yonder there was no water—by the walls of Jerusalem white in the moonlight.

The very ledges of rock took shape in the night, rising like battlements before him, inanimate and forbidding and terrible.

VI

EVERY move of the Crusaders was reported daily to Saladin by his spies and scouts. He knew that they were assembling at Beth Nable to besiege Jerusalem, and he felt suspense growing among his own men, wearied as they were by the ordeal of Acre and the rout at Arsuf. Without respite he directed the work of preparation for the decisive conflict. In the saddle before sun-up, he watched his masons raising the walls; he divided the circuit of the walls among his amirs, while gangs of laborers hauled up stones for the engines. At times he even dismounted to go among them and carry stones himself.

"Every one knows," Baha ad-Din relates, "that in the land around Jerusalem it is useless to dig wells to find drinking water, the ground being nothing but a mountain of very hard rock. The Sultan was careful to cut off all the waters found around the Holy City, to stop up the springs, to ruin the cisterns, and to break down the wells. There remained not a drop of water fit to drink outside the walls. He also sent the order into all the provinces to hasten troops toward him."

On the Wednesday after the loss of the caravan the old Kurd called his amirs into council to announce to them his plan for the defense of Jerusalem. They thronged into his pavilion and seated themselves about the carpet, whispering together. Many faces were missing from the circle. Al Adil, the shrewd and resourceful, had been sent to quell a revolt beyond the Euphrates, and Taki ad-Din, who had been the sword arm of the Sultan, had been laid in his grave on the eastern frontier—when Saladin had held in his hand the letter announcing his death, he had sent away all the attendants from the tent, and had wept, fingering the broken seals of the missive.

But El Meshtub, commander of the Kurds, was back again, ransomed. At his coming—who had cost Saladin dear by the harsh terms of his surrender—the

Sultan instead of reproaching him had risen from his seat to take him in his arms, saying that he had endured more than any of them at Acre.

Meshtub was seated again with the newcomers—Aboul Heidja, the Fat, who could barely move once he was down on his heels, and the lean Turkomans from the east. Asad ad-Din, the veteran was there, and Baha ad-Din, who, from his master's side, scanned the ring of faces intently.

Saladin, leaning toward the *kadi*, bade him speak for a little on the war. And while the learned man was talking, Saladin mustered his thoughts knowing well that these chieftains were balancing between zeal for his cause and dread. For they feared that a siege of Jerusalem would be a second Acre, and they longed to keep to the open country.

What followed is told by Baha ad-Din.

"The Sultan remained silent some time in the attitude of a man who reflects. The amirs seemed to be in the best of moods, but their inner feelings were very different. They said to a man that the presence of the Sultan in Jerusalem would be no advantage, and might be a peril for Islam—that they would hold Jerusalem themselves, while he kept the outer country as at Acre, to surround the Franks. Then he spoke:

" 'The praise to God. Today you are the only army of Islam. Only you are capable of confronting adversaries such as we have before us. If you withdraw—may it not please God—the enemy will roll up the country as you would roll up a leaf of parchment. On you alone depends the safety of the Moslems, everywhere. I have spoken.'

"El Meshtub then took the word.

" 'By God, I swear that while I live, I will not cease to aid thee!'

"Others answered likewise, and this cheered the spirit of the Sultan. He had the customary supper served and after that every one retired.

"Thursday ended in great preparation and bustle. In the evening we attended again upon our prince, and watched with him a part of the night, but he was not at all communicative. We made the last prayer, which was also the signal for all of us to retire. I was going out with the others when he recalled me. So I sat down again at his side, and he asked me if I had heard the latest news. I answered no.

" 'Today I have had a communication,' he said, 'from Aboul Heidja. The amirs and Mamluks held a gathering in his quarters, and blamed us for wishing to shut ourselves up in the city. They said that every one would undergo the fate of Acre, while all the outer country would fall to our enemies. They think it would be better to risk a ranged battle; then, if God gave us victory, we would be the masters; if defeated, we would lose Jerusalem but the army would be saved.

" 'The letter also contained this clause: "If you wish us to remain in the city, stay with us or else leave a member of your family—for the Kurds would never obey the Turks, and otherwise the Turks would no longer obey the Kurds."'

"Knowing by this that they did not intend to remain in the city, the Sultan had a grieving at his heart. He had for Jerusalem an attachment that can hardly be conceived, and this message caused him pain. I spent that night with him. It was the eve of Friday in the dry season, and no person other than God made a third with us.

"We decided to place in the city his great-nephew, son of Ferrukh Shah and Lord of Baalbek. At first he thought of shutting himself up in the Holy City. We watched and prayed together.

"At daybreak he was still awake, and I begged him to take an hour's rest. I went out to my quarters but had no sooner arrived than I heard the muezzin call to prayer, and for awhile I made the necessary rinsings in water, since the day was beginning to break. As I sometimes made the morning prayer with the Sultan I went back to him and found him finishing his ablutions.

" 'I have not slept a single moment,' he said to me.

" 'I know that.'

" 'How could you know it?'

" 'Because I have not slept myself—there was not time.'

"After making the prayer together, I said to him, 'An idea has come to me. May I submit it to you?'

"He replied, 'Speak!'

" 'O my Lord, thou art overwhelmed with cares. Today is Friday, in which all prayer is three-fold effective, and here we are, in a most suitable spot. Let the Sultan make the ablutions, with bowings and prostrations, and confide the keys of his problem to the hand of God.'

"For the Sultan believed sincerely in all the tenets of the Faith, and submitted himself without misgiving to the divine wisdom. I left him then, but afterward, when the hour arrived, I made the prayer beside him in the mosque of Al Aksa, and I saw him make two bowings and prostrate himself, murmuring in a low voice. I saw the tears drip upon his grizzled beard and fall to the prayer rug.

"In the evening of the same day I resumed my usual attendance upon him, and at that time a dispatch arrived from Djordic who commanded the advance guard (confronting the Franks). We read these words:

> "All the army of the enemy has just drawn up, mounted, on the crest of the hill and then retired to its camp. We have just sent spies to find out what is happening.

"Saturday morning another dispatch came in, reading as follows:

> "Our spy has just come back and tells us that a dispute divides the enemy, some wishing to push on to the Holy City and others intending to return to their own territory. The French insist on marching upon Jerusalem. 'We have left our own land,' they said, 'to regain the Holy City, and we will not return without taking it.' To that the king of England replied, 'From this point on, all the springs have been destroyed, so there is no water left near the city. Where, then, can we water our horses?'
>
> "Some one pointed out that they could have water at Tekou'a, a stream which runs about a parasang from Jerusalem.
>
> " 'How,' said the king, 'could we water our beasts there?'
>
> " 'We will divide the army,' they replied, 'into two bodies, one of which will mount and ride off to the watering place while the other remains near the city to carry on the siege, and every one will go once a day to Tekou'a.'
>
> " 'When one part of the army goes to drink with its animals, the garrison of the city will sally out and attack the others who remain,' the king answered, 'and that will end it.'*
>
> "They decided finally to choose among the best known men three hundred persons who would in turn pass on their powers to a dozen individuals who would then choose three to decide the question. And they spent the night waiting for the decision of the three.

"On the next morning we received another message. The Franks had broken camp and were on their way back to Ramlah."

Saladin had triumphed and Richard had failed, without giving battle. And the reason for this was that the Lion Heart, the mightiest man of them all in single combat, became helpless when he took command of an army.

VII

THE PLIANT steel of Saladin's patience had broken the iron courage of the Crusaders. As iron snaps asunder, the army broke up into fragments once it had turned its back upon the hills of Jerusalem. Angered past reconciliation, the French went off to the north; the pilgrims and masterless men trailed down to Jaffa, while the Italian soldiery hastened to their citadels of trade along the coast, and only the Templars and Hospitallers remained to guard the new wall of Ascalon.

Richard went at once to Acre, as a man

*Ambrose gives this account of Richard's decision to turn back:

"The French urged him many times to lay siege to the Holy City. The king said, 'We are far from the sea, and the Saracens would come down to cut off our supplies. Then the circuit of the city is so great that so many men would be needed . . . that we could not keep the host from being attacked by the Turks. And if I should lead the host, and if I should besiege Jerusalem under these conditions, and if misfortune befell the host, I should be forever blamed and dishonored. It is not to be done.'"

Richard then left the decision to the men selected by the council, who seem to have been Templars and Hospitallers for the most part. Another chronicler, de Vinsouf, says that if they decided to go on, Richard offered to go with them, not as leader but as a soldier in the ranks.

As to the final verdict, Ambrose says:

"Those who had sworn and determined not to go on explained their reason—that no water could be found for beasts or men, without great labor and danger. It would be the season of great heat, and no water could be found without going two leagues into a district filled with enemies."

hurries from a long ordeal. His thoughts he kept to himself. Beyond doubt, he was impatient to embark for England where he was sorely needed and had only lingered this long because the Crusaders had insisted on marching to Jerusalem. So long as they turned their faces toward the Holy City the pride of the Lion Heart would not let him forsake them.

Now, with failure accepted, his hands were free. As a boy casts aside a once cherished toy for a new plaything, he started toward the sea. Not before he had done two mad things. In solemn conference he approved a plan to march against Cairo, after his departure—even promising the aid of some three thousand English and Normans, although even the minstrel Ambrose realized such a move was hopeless. And, impatiently, he sent envoys to find Al Adil and bid the Sultan's brother make terms for the Crusaders.

Still, he clung to the hope of fair terms, saying that he would not relinquish half ruined Ascalon. On his way to embark—after joining the queen at Acre—he ordered his own followers to make ready to take ship for Beirut to win this fertile northern port for the Crusaders. He paid no heed to the gibes of the French or to the song they sang in the taverns. For they made up a song about a coward and a king that stung the pride of the red haired warrior.

So matters were, when Saladin seized his opportunity. He roused his amirs, shook from them the inertia of the year's defensive caution, and launched his horsemen straight down from Jerusalem to Jaffa.

They came like a sword thrust out of the night, twenty thousand mounted men with siege engines on camel and mule back, and an exulting mass of Arabs clinging to their flanks. They drove the surprised Crusaders from the field and suburbs and started to pound with rocks and iron javelins at the gate of the wall toward Jerusalem.

Some five thousand Christian men-at-arms were penned within the wall and in the tumult they manned their defenses sturdily, while a ship sped to Richard at Acre with tidings of the attack. The first rush of the Moslems was beaten back, and the sharp check cooled the spirits of the Turkomans who had no sympathy with sieges. It needed all Saladin's arguing to drive them to the assault, and for three days the Sultan's *mangonels* gnawed at the gate until it was broken down and a breach of two lance lengths opened in the wall beside it.

Then the Moslems scented victory, and flung themselves at the gap under a storm of arrows, their long scimitars swinging and crashing into the close ranks of the Crusaders. Climbing over bodies and broken stones the exultant Mamluks forced the breach and drove the Christians through the streets, up the slope to the little citadel on a rocky height above the sand of the shore.

After them swarmed the Turkoman clans and the Arabs, nearly maddened by the rich plunder around them in dwellings and shops. Beating in the door of a monastery, the Moslems fell to hacking the bodies of the monks, killing them slowly to enjoy their torture. A church was ransacked and burned, and smoke poured up from the alleys where the looters snatched and screamed.

They were beyond all control of their officers. Finding wine casks in the houses, they beat in the heads of the casks and let the wine run underfoot; they forced captive women and children to drive the herds of swine together in one place and then left the bodies of the Christians strewn among the carcasses of the abominated swine.

SOME of the fugitives climbed into boats drawn up on the gray sand of the shore, while others struggled to launch the boats. Alberic of Rheims, the commander of Jaffa, tried to escape in one of these vessels, but his knights pulled him back and led him up to a tower of the citadel. Few survived here—some two thousand it seems—and their situation was the more hazardous because the wall of the

citadel had not been entirely rebuilt before the Moslem attack. Alberic of Rheims saw no hope for them.

"We can do nothing here except give up our lives," he said.

The patriarch, a gigantic man who had escaped the contagion of fear, had sterner stuff in him. He rallied the people, reminding them that a ship had been sent to Acre for aid three days ago. If the assistance did not come, they could beg Saladin for terms.

Saladin tried to restore order among his looters, and to launch a fresh attack on the gray stone wall of the citadel.

"The soldiers would not obey him," Baha ad-Din explains, "although he did not cease urging them until a late hour of the night. Then, perceiving that they were harassed by heat and fighting and smoke to the point of stupor, he mounted his horse and returned to his tent which was pitched near the baggage trains. There the officers who were on duty rejoined him, and I went to get some sleep in my tent. But it was impossible to sleep—I was so troubled by misgiving.

"At daybreak we heard trumpets sound among the Franks, and we thought that aid had come for them. The Sultan sent for me, and said:

" 'Reenforcements must have come for them by sea. But enough Moslem troops are on the shore to keep any one from debarking. Here is what must be done. Go and find the Malik el Dahir,* and tell him to place himself outside the southern gate. You will enter the citadel with some men of your choice, and induce the Franks to pass out. You will take possession of all valuables and arms you find there.'

"I went off at once, taking Shams ad-Din with me, and I found the Malik el Dahir on the hill near the sea with the advanced guard. He slept, in his coat of loose mail and mail hood, ready for combat. When I woke him, he got up at once half asleep and mounted his horse, while I accompanied him to the place where he was to await the Sultan's orders. There he made me explain what I planned to do.

"With my men I then entered the town of Jaffa, and on reaching the citadel we called to the Franks to come out. They replied that they would do so and began making preparations.

"Just as they started out Aziz ad-Din remarked that they must not be allowed out until we had removed the Moslem soldiers from the town, or they would be pillaged. Djordic then tried to drive back our men by great blows of his baton; but as they were no longer under the control of their officers or in ranks he found it impossible to make them go out. He kept on struggling with the mob against my remonstrance until it was full daylight.

"Seeing how the time had passed, I said to him, 'Reenforcements are drawing nearer to the Franks and the only thing for us to do is to hasten the evacuation of the citadel. That is what the Sultan insisted upon.'

"Then he consented to do what I asked. We went to the gate of the citadel nearest the spot where the Malik el Dahir waited. Here we managed to pass out forty-nine Franks with their horses and women, and sent them away.† But then those who remained in the citadel took it into their heads to resist us.

"By now the relieving fleet had drawn near and every one could count the ships, and the garrison prepared to resume fighting—we saw them putting on mail and seizing their shields.

"Seeing matters take this turn, I descended from my knoll near the gate and went to warn Aziz ad-Din, who was posted below with some troops. A moment later I was out of the town and with the Malik, who sent me to the Sultan to inform him of what was happening. He ordered a trumpeter to blow the call to arms. The drums rolled the recall, and our soldiers hastened in from all parts of the country to join in the conflict. They closed in on the town and the citadel. The Franks of

*One of Saladin's sons. On hearing that ships were approaching, the Sultan granted terms to the garrison in the citadel.

†As Baha ad-Din had feared, the first Crusaders to go out were seized and plundered and put to death. Saladin had agreed to grant them their lives and as much property as they could carry off, on the payment of the usual small ransom for each individual.

the garrison finding that no aid was coming from the ships believed death inevitable."

KING RICHARD was in command of the galleys that drifted beyond the swell of the Jaffa beach. The galley bearing word of the Moslem attack had reached the harbor of Acre in the evening, while he was in his tent making the last preparations for embarking with his followers for Beirut and then for Europe. The messengers had come before him without ceremony, crying that Jaffa was taken and a remnant of the Christians besieged in the citadel, and that all would be lost unless aid reached them at once.

"As God lives," Richard had answered, "I will go there!"

And go he did, in spite of obstacles—for some of the army was already at Beirut, and the French refused point blank to march again under his standard. The Templars and Hospitallers agreed to go to Jaffa, by land—only to be held up on the way by a Moslem ambush. Richard boarded his galleys with the Earl of Leicester, and those stalwarts, his constant companions, Andrew of Chavigny and the Priux knights. With some hundreds of men-at-arms and volunteers from among the Genoese and Pisan bowmen, he put to sea, only to be held back for two days by contrary winds off the Carmel headland. They reached the Jaffa beach in the night and waited to see what story the dawn would tell.

When the mists cleared and the sun blazed above the distant hills they saw nothing to cheer them. The beach was filled with Arabs and Turks, who were obviously settled there. Above the line of the sand, smoke eddied from the low wall of the city, half a mile from them. In the palm groves near the wall stood Moslem pavilions. Only Moslem banners could be made out. No sign of any kind was visible on the fortress, on its low bluff over the sand.

The galleys moved in closer. Richard, standing with his knights under the red awning of the stern, scanned the line of the shore, and turned to his companions.

"Sir Knights," he said briefly, "what shall we do—go away, or land?"

To try to force their way ashore in the face of Saladin's army seemed to them out of the question, and they said so. They believed that all the people of the castle had been killed.

At this moment the survivors of the citadel were actually calling to them, but the sound of the voices was drowned by the pulse of the swell and the taunting cries of the Arabs, "*Allah akbar—Allah l'allahu.*" So Baha ad-Din says.

Then a black figure dropped from the wall of the citadel to the sand of the beach below. It fell but got up again and ran through the Moslems to the edge of the swell. Plunging into the water it swam toward the nearest galley, which moved in and picked it up. The swimmer proved to be a priest of the garrison and he was taken at once to the long red galley over which the king's banner floated.

Panting and dripping, the messenger flung himself on his knees before the king.

"Beau Sire, the people who await you here are lost if you do not aid them."

"What!" Richard demanded. "Are any living yonder? Where are they?"

"Some of them live, shut in the towers."

Richard looked at his companions.

"Messires—damned be he who hangs back!"

He ordered his vessel to row in, while the half naked seamen on the benches looked each at the other askance. The long oars rose and dipped, the red galley with the dragon head prow slipped into the line of the swell and the others followed after. On the sideboards the English men-at-arms buckled tight their belts, thrusting their arms through the loops of the shields and freed the swords in their sheaths.

The red galley was the first to grate upon the sand. It lurched and rolled in the swell, while the Moslems yelled their hatred and the swarthy Italian shipmen crossed themselves and snatched up bows and axes. Richard gave no more orders,

and tarried not to bring any reason into the madness of this landfall. He jumped over the side, waist deep in the water. He still wore his ship slippers with no other armor than a mail shirt and a steel cap. On his shoulder he gripped a crossbow and his long sword hung at his side.

Wading through the swell, he began to shoot bolts at the Moslems, with Peter of Priux and another knight beside him. When they came out of the water they drew their swords, lashing about them under the arrows that the shipmen plied from the prow. Recognizing the king, the Moslems in front of him gave back hastily, while the English hastened forward to form a shield ring about him. Other galleys were running up on the beach, the crews casting beams and benches ashore. Men caught these up and carried them forward, lugging the small skiffs and débris of the beach into a barricade of sorts.

But Richard was not within the barricade. Taking a shield from a man, he ran across the beach to a postern gate in the wall and a stair that he remembered led to the Templars' house.

With his knights clattering after him he leaped up the stair and the Arab looters of the alleys yelled in amazement at sight of the dripping figure that strode among them. Richard cleared the alleys and pounded at a gate of the citadel until the garrison became aware of him.

By then his galleys held the beach, and his men were streaming up the Templars' stair. His banner went up, on the tower of the citadel. The knights of the garrison took new heart at his coming; they sallied forth and began to drive the disorganized Moslems toward the gates of the outer town.

"Then," Baha ad-Din relates, "charging in a mass on our men, they drove them out of the town. The gate was so clogged by the fleeing that many lost their lives. A throng of pillagers who followed the army had lingered in some churches, occupied with deeds that should not be mentioned. The Franks forced their way in and killed them or made them prisoners."

"This all happened under my eyes in less than an hour. As I was mounted, I set off at a gallop to advise the Sultan, whom I found with the two envoys* before him, and holding in his hand the pen with which he was about to write the letter of grace.

"I whispered to him what had happened and, without commencing to write, he began to talk to them to distract their attention.

"Some seconds later Moslems came up, fleeing before the enemy. Seeing them, he cried out to his men to seize the envoys, and to mount their horses."

RICHARD'S quick action had wrought something like a miracle. On his heels the men from the galleys had been able to break into the waterfront of Jaffa before the disciplined portions of Saladin's troops could come up to oppose them; the rout of the Moslems in the streets had thoroughly disorganized the army outside, forcing Saladin to draw back in haste to the nearest hills to take stock of the situation.

Richard and his crossbowmen pursued as best they could with the three horses they managed to pick up in the town. The bolts of the crossbows followed the Moslems for two miles, and that night Richard pitched his tent where Saladin's pavilion had been.

Word of the arrival of *Malik Ric* spread over the countryside, and when quiet had fallen around Jaffa in the evening, some of the old Mamluks and chieftains like Dolderim went back to the Christian lines out of curiosity to see this king who had dared land in the face of an army. They came in peace, and were taken to the royal tent, where Richard cried them a welcome.

They found him still in his mail shirt, seated on his pallet amid a mass of arms and gear. Around the great tallow candles stood the tall figures of his knights. Wine goblets had been emptied

*The patriarch and the commander of the garrison who had come through the fighting to beg for terms before the landing of the galleys.

and filled again many times, while the ruddy warrior king laughed at the happenings of the day.

Nothing could have pleased him more than the appearance of the dark Moslem lords in armor and ceremonious *khalats*. He greeted them, called them by name.

"Why did the Sultan leave at my coming?" he demanded. "By God, I did not come armed for serious fighting. Look, I still have on no shoes but ship sandals." Again he exclaimed, "By the great God, I did not think he could take Jaffa in two months, and here he carried it in two days!"

After thinking a moment, he gave them a message for Saladin.

"Tell him I have no wish to be a Pharoah over this land. Will he sacrifice all the Moslems to keep me out? I renounce the claims I made to Al Adil. Let the Sultan grant me but one church, and I will return him the like."

To this upon the next day Saladin made grave response.

"The king has made himself master of all these cities, yet he knows well that if he goes away they will fall into our power. If it seems a simple matter for him to stay the winter here, far from his own country, is it not more easy for me?

"I have around me my family and my children. Moreover I am now an old man, no longer having a taste for the pleasures of the world. I have renounced all such. As for my troops, the men I have round me in the winter are replaced by others in the summer. In the end, I believe that my actions will be accounted as true devotion. And I shall not cease to hold to this line of conduct until God grants the victory to him to whom He is pleased to grant it."

Behind these words might be perceived a hope that Richard would leave the coast, and a dread that he would stay. Saladin's will to hold out was steadfast as ever, but he was laboring with the disorganization among his men. Under no other circumstances, perhaps, would he have agreed to the plan to seize Richard that his men were now forming.

In the interval arrived Henry of Champagne with a single galley and a few knights. He brought word that the rest were checked by the Moslems holding the shore.

Richard had now at Jaffa some fifty-five knights with several hundred men-at-arms and two thousand-odd bowmen, Genoese and Pisans among them. But he had no more than fifteen horses. With this semblance of an army he lay outside Jaffa facing the Moslems.

He had landed on Saturday. It was Tuesday night that a detachment of Turks from Aleppo and one of the Kurdish clans started forth to penetrate his camp and carry him off.

VIII

DARKNESS covered the earth, blurring the outlines of the squat fig trees and the shaggy palms against the sky where the stars were fading. Dogs barked from time to time in the distance. Along the beach behind the camp the swell sighed gently. Beside the tents a church tower loomed.

Among the tents men sprawled on cloaks, breathing heavily. There were no camp-fires, and the young moon had slipped out of sight long since. Sentries who had paced the hard ground idly in the earlier hours of the night now leaned on their spears or sat beneath the screen of the trees where the water bags dripped, and tried not to snore. A young Genoese got up from the ground, yawned and spat. Stepping over the huddled bodies around him, he walked between the tents, lifting his feet drowsily over the cords that had been tightened by the dampness of the night.

He walked out into a trampled field in which tufted artichokes had been growing not long since. He squatted down, blinking indifferently at the sky, now turning gray. Somewhere horses moved with a shuffling sound, and he heard the mutter of men's voices. But there were no horses afoot in the camp. Down in the murk toward the hills dull gleams appeared and

vanished, and he watched them. Then he heard a faint clinking of metal, and a cold chill passed over his skin.

The dim flashing yonder under the lightening sky came from polished helmets, and men and horses were moving toward the camp. The Genoese ran back toward the tents, shouting:

"Arms! Arms!"

Sentries called out questions, and the nearest sleepers roused. The Genoese ran on, stumbling over the ropes, and tall figures came from the tents to question him. An order was given and a horn blared. Knights ran up, pulling mail coifs over their heads and knotting sword girdles about their hips. Some of them had not stopped to don breeches or hose, and their legs shone white in the murk.

King Richard appeared among them in full mail, his Danish ax swinging in his hand. A horse was led up and he mounted hastily. The quiet Earl of Leicester and his companions followed his example without ado—there were only ten horses, and in the darkness a man took what he found. Even those makeshift chargers, sorry nags some of them—which did not know a lance from a cart pole—were better than no horses.

The sky lightened in the east, with the first yellow of sunrise. Men said that Moslems were advancing in squadrons, slowly. Either they had heard the Christians rouse out, or they did not like to charge until they could see something. Beyond the church, on the other side of the town, the horns of the Genoese and Pisans sounded.

Richard had Normans and English with him. Under his sharp commands they ranged themselves in a half circle spreading from the church to the shore. The men of the outer rank went down on their right knees, holding their shields slanting from the ground in their left hands. Their right hands held their lances, the butts wedged into the ground, the iron heads pointing outward. Between every pair of lances a crossbowmen took his place, with another standing behind him to load an extra piece and pass it forward to him.

Along their rank rode King Richard, outlined against the red dawn, and they heard his deep voice.

"Stand fast, valiant men . . . Do not give ground, for the enemy are round us, and to flee is to die."

His voice went away, and the Moslems charged with a sudden burst of sound and a trampling of hoofs on the hard ground. They came direct for the red banner of the lion, and the crossbows whirred in their faces. The horses crashed into the spears, and the clatter of swords was heard.

The charge did not break the sturdy spearmen, and the Moslems wheeled off. Other waves charged, but under the sting of the iron bolts, they turned and galloped along the front, plying their bows. Richard had not the patience to endure this for long. He led out his ten horsemen against the clans, with spears down. The heavier knights beat a way through the Kurds, and Richard found himself beyond them.

Looking around, he saw the Earl of Leicester on foot, fighting with his sword. Richard galloped over to him and covered him until he could mount a riderless horse. The mêlée grew thick about them, and some Turks overthrew and disarmed the knight of Mauleon. They were carrying him off a prisoner when the king saw them and charged them, lashing about him with his great ax until de Mauleon was free and among his own men.

The Moslems drew off, and the sun flooded the plain with light. For a while there was a pause while the two sides ranged themselves anew. And in this quiet, an unarmed Turk rode up holding high his right arm gripping in his left the reins of two fine horses ready saddled. He was allowed into the lines and led to the knights, to whom he explained that the horses were a gift from Al Adil to the English king. The Sultan's brother had seen that Richard was poorly mounted.

"Sire," his knights cried, "do not ride

either of them. There is evil in this and they will bear you off to the Moslems."

For answer Richard swung himself into the saddle of one of the chargers.

"If Satan sent me a good horse this day," he said, "I would ride him."

And he ordered a purse to be given to the messenger.

BY MID-MORNING the battle was going badly for the Christians. Saladin's mounted bowmen drove at them, first at one place, then at another. The men-at-arms stood their ground, but the galley men drifted back to the ships away from the missiles. Some of the Genoese ran into the town, and behind them the Moslem horse penetrated the gaps in the city wall.

When Richard heard of this he rode back, into Jaffa, taking with him two knights and a couple of archers. He dared not withdraw more men from the thin line of the Normans and English. Trotting through the narrow streets among the fugitives, he came full upon three Turks who had bright caparisoning on their horses. He dug his spurs into the Arab charger, and struck down one of the Moslems with his sword, knocking a second man from the saddle. The third fled and the archers caught the two horses.

Seeing the king, some seamen trailed after him, and Richard fairly cleared the streets with a growing queue of retainers behind him. This done, he seized the moment of quiet to circle down to the beach, sending his new followers into the galleys to rout out the malingerers. When the ships were cleared he upbraided the throng, telling off five men to guard each vessel. With the rest he went back into the city, mustering wounded and unarmed men to pile stones within the breaches of the crumbling wall. Then he led the fugitives out to the fighting line.

Here he dared not rest. The Moslems were still attacking. With his dozen horsemen Richard sallied out and broke up a charge. Still, he pressed on, his great sword swinging over his head. He left his companions and went forward, disappearing among the Moslems.

Some Turks closed around him and he beat them off. A single officer charged him at a gallop, bending low in the saddle, his round shield raised and his scimitar swinging. As he came he mocked those who hung back before the king.

"Make way!" he shouted. "O dogs—make way for a man!"

Richard saw him and wheeled his charger, rising in his stirrups to strike once with his sword. The long blade split the light shield, and bit through the man's throat, turning against the bones of his chest. With the head the Moslem's shoulder and arm flew off and his body dropped lifeless to the ground.

Shouting their dismay, the others drew back before the iron rider who could not be overthrown. They shot arrows at him, and launched javelins as he passed among them, but one man among so many is no easy mark.

From the whirling horses and the dust clouds Richard emerged again into the view of his men, with javelins sticking in his mail and the leather caparisoning of his horse pierced with arrows.

No longer did the Moslems attack with spirit. Richard seemed to them invulnerable, and to go against his sword was surely death. They could not break the line of the Christians again, and when Saladin gave the order for another onset, his riders sat their horses motionless and sullen. Snatching up his rein, the Sultan rode among them, but their eyes were elsewhere.

From the line of spearmen Richard had appeared anew. Into the cleared ground between Christian and Moslem he trotted lance uplifted, and from left to right he rode slowly down the Moslem front, and no man dared go out against him.

When Saladin cried to them again to charge, only the Malik, his son, responded. When the old Sultan motioned him back, some of the amirs laughed, and the brother of Meshtub shouted:

"Make your young officers charge!

Call them forth, who struck us the day of the taking of Jaffa, and stole the loot from our men!"

Saladin looked about him and gave the order to retire, riding off with his Mamluks to his own tent.

RICHARD had saved Jaffa. But in the next days, overwearied, he fell ill with many of his people. In the heat and stench of the town that was little better than a shambles, men died swiftly, and the king did not get back his strength. They carried him up to Acre, where he ordered Count Henry and the masters of the Temple and Hospital to his couch.

They came with grave faces. At Jerusalem, Saladin had found new reenforcements, trained Mamluks from Egypt. The malcontents had been sent away, the army whipped into shape for a new blow against the weakening Crusaders. The French had moved south, but were camped at Caesaria, determined not to fight under Richard's banner. The whole line of the coast was open to attack, with no more than a hundred knights to be relied upon to obey Richard. The king, wasted by the fever, knew that he could not take the saddle again for weeks.

"Bid Al Adil from me," he said, "to make what terms he can for us. Anything, but the surrender of Ascalon."

He had struck his last blow in the Holy Land. Humphrey of Toron and the veteran lords of the land went to Saladin's camp, and there agreed upon the terms of peace with Al Adil—for Saladin, still desiring final victory, knew that his troops were weary of the war and that no gain could come by fighting on.

"I fear to make peace," he said to Baha ad-Din, "for I know not what will happen if I die."

The terms were simple—each side keeping, in effect, what it held at the time. The Christians became acknowledged masters of the coast, from Tyre to Jaffa, including, of course, Acre. This meant that they kept also the neighboring villages in the plain midway to the foothills. Ramlah on the pilgrim road from Jaffa to Jerusalem was to be held mutually, and no taxes were to be placed on merchandise going and coming across the new frontier—in this clause, and in the long dispute over Ascalon, the hand of Italian merchants is to be seen. Christian pilgrims were to be free to journey up to Jerusalem without paying tribute, under the protection of the Sultan.

Richard had to yield Ascalon—at least the fortifications of the city were to be torn down and the place left open, without being held by either side for three years.

And a truce was agreed upon for three years from the coming Easter, which meant more nearly four years.

Al Adil rode down with the chieftains of the Crusaders, to hear the Christians take the oath at Acre. It was Wednesday, the second of September in this year 1192 that Count Henry, Humphrey of Toron, Balian of Ibelin and the masters of the military orders gathered in the small stone flagged room beside the sick chamber of the king. Under Al Adil's eyes a written parchment lay upon the table where candles stood to give a better light than the dim embrasure. In their court surcoats the Christian lords who were now to be masters of this strip of coast came forward and signed the parchment or made their mark, and swore upon their faith to keep the new peace.

Then the parchment was carried in to Richard, and a priest began to read over the written words. The sick king, who knew of the conditions, lifted his hand impatiently, bidding the reader cease.

"I give my word and my faith," he said, and turned his head away from them. He had sworn to them that when the truce ended he would return to the Holy Land with new forces, to renew the war.

The next day Saladin swore to the peace before his amirs.

On that day Moslem officers rode into the streets and market places of Jerusalem and announced that peace was made —that Jerusalem was safe in the hands of Islam and that Moslems could go where

they willed among the Christians. Drums beat by the gates and throngs sat in joyful talk. Venturesome souls wandered down into the Christian camps; warriors from the East left their outposts and rode among the weary men-at-arms who had left Europe long months before.

The men-at-arms were drinking wine, well content to hear that the war had ceased. New faces appeared on the highways, and already the Christian priests and barons were making ready to journey up to Jerusalem to visit the Sepulchre.

But Richard would not go. He would not go as a pilgrim to the Sepulchre that he had sworn to redeem with his sword.*

*But Saladin was not to relinquish the Holy Land. All the armed power of Christendom, with a sacrifice of nearly two hundred thousand men, had won back only a fragment of his conquests and not one of the holy places. Although he did not realize it, the truce that Saladin had dreaded was to be a safeguard for Islam, since his own days were numbered.

Nine months after the signing of the peace with Richard, the old Sultan died in Damascus, worn out by the ordeal of the long years in the saddle. Baha ad-Din relates that in the Sultan's treasury only forty-seven dirhems and a single piece of gold were found—Saladin had given away all his wealth to his soldiers and to carry on the holy war. They had to borrow money to bury him.

Nor was the Lion Heart able to set foot again in the Holy Land. The tale of his return in disguise—to escape capture by the princes of Europe his enemies—and his seizure by the Archduke of Austria and his long imprisonment, followed by his struggle to regain his lands in France from Philip-Augustus, is too well known to need retelling.

BOOKED *for* MURDER

By ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON

A Tale of a Near-Perfect Crime

RUNNING his eye down the San Francisco *Bulletin's* classified column headed "Summer Cottages for Rent," Mr. Sarg, known to the Boston police as Second Story Sarg, came to the following advertisement:

> Five room log bungalow near Corvado-in-the-Hills available for three months' lease. Completely furnished. Ideal summer retreat. Restful atmosphere. See G. Hazleton, owner.

"Just what I'm looking for," thought Sarg aloud.

He made inquiries and learned that Corvado-in-the-Hills was a secluded mountain village some two hundred miles from San Francisco, that it was at the end of a jerkwater stub of railroad known as the Corvado Branch, and that passenger service on the branch consisted of a mixed train Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only.

"The farther it is off the beaten track," mused Sarg, "the better I'll like it."

Sarg, now on his first trip to the Pacific Coast, desired absolute seclusion for

three months. He was an élite burglar from Boston. That is he was a professional prowler who had once been a footman, later a valet, during which services he had become schooled in the diction and the manners of the aristocratic homes on Beacon Hill. The purloining of an employer's diamond shirt studs had led to his discharge without recommendation, after which he had called on the quality only by night, surreptitiously, via second story windows.

He now packed his bags, checked out of his San Francisco hotel and took a train for Corvado Junction. On the way he made a stern resolution. He resolved not to work on this vacation regardless of any tempting opportunity that might fall in his path. He resolved not to steal any of the silver or household effects of the bungalow he planned to rent for three months. In such a resolve he was utterly sincere.

At Corvado Junction he made connection with Wednesday's mixed train for Corvado-in-the-Hills. An hour later he disembarked at his destination.

He found a peaceful little mountain town, renamed and revamped from the ruins of an old gold camp into a bungalow colony for summer tourists. Behind the depot a boy with a Ford called—

"Taxi, sir?"

"Can you direct me to a Mr. G. Hazleton?" inquired Sarg.

"Sure," answered the boy brightly. "It's only a mile up Corvado Cañon. Hop in."

Sarg entered the Ford with his two bags, which were as impeccable as his personal grooming, and was driven a mile out of the village, up a timbered ravine, to the residence of G. Hazleton.

It proved to be a neat log bungalow with a wide, stone chimney and surrounded by a rose garden. On its porch sat a young man with pink cheeks and blond hair, smoking a curved stem pipe and reading a book.

Sarg, not knowing as yet whether he would succeed in renting the bungalow, left his bags in the taxi and told the boy to wait.

He walked to the porch, a tall, gravely personable man; certainly he seemed to be every inch a gentleman. The young man on the porch observed his approach, laid down his pipe, took a slip at random from his pocket and used it to mark the page at which he was reading the book, laid the book aside and arose to greet Sarg.

"Are you Mr. G. Hazleton?" inquired Sarg.

"I am," was the smiling response.

Sarg stated his desires and offered references. He produced the references, which were forged. As he expected, Hazleton gave them only a glance and returned them with a friendly smile.

"Why, yes, Mr. Sarg, I'd like to leave a tenant here for three months while I make a trip to Hawaii. Otherwise," the young man added with a genial grimace, "thieves might break in and steal everything in the house."

"Quite right," agreed Sarg, soberly and sincerely.

"And I'd expect the tenant to water the roses every few days."

"Naturally," returned Sarg, casting an approving eye upon the rose garden. Sarg, in the old days of service among the rich, had watered more than a few roses.

"You'd like to look around, of course," suggested G. Hazleton.

He led Sarg within and they looked around. Hazleton, it developed, was a bachelor. His furnishings were rather mixed but were luxuriously comfortable; they exactly suited Sarg.

Especially was Sarg pleased with the library, which was half the house. It had a six-foot stone hearth. It was floored with a large Oriental rug and the walls were lined with books. The books were mostly light fiction. The reading of light fiction, particularly detective fiction, chanced to be Sarg's one and only diversion.

"I'll return from Honolulu in three months," stated Hazleton, "and therefore I only wish to rent the premises for that period."

"And that is exactly the period I'd like to rest here in quiet," agreed Sarg. "I

would be willing to vacate the day you return."

Hazleton named a rental price for the three months. Sarg accepted. He drew out his wallet and paid the full three months' rent, cash in advance. The owner wrote and signed a receipt. Sarg noted the signature—Gerald Hazleton.

Gerald Hazleton — where had Sarg heard that name before?

Suddenly he remembered.

"Are you Gerald Hazleton, the writer?" he inquired respectfully.

Hazleton's smile was one of wry self-depreciation.

"Some," he evaded, "say I'm a writer and some say I'm not."

"I say you are," volunteered Sarg with warmth, "if you're the Gerald Hazleton who wrote—" he reeled off a list of titles.

"You've named them all," laughed Hazleton, "except my latest, 'Booked For Murder.' Did you read that one?"

"No," answered Sarg. "Haven't been able to get hold of a copy. I've heard it's a best seller." From Boston to Frisco there was no more avid mystery fiction fan than Second Story Sarg.

"You'll find a copy on one of these shelves, I think," said Hazleton. He then looked at his watch and puckered his brow. "By Jove, I wonder if I could catch the *President Grant?*"

"The what?"

"The boat leaving Frisco for Honolulu tomorrow. You see I'm due in Honolulu to absorb local color for my next book. Now if I took your taxi back to the depot I could catch the same train to Corvado Junction and make tomorrow's boat at Frisco."

The result was that an hour later Mr. G. Hazleton had departed, bag and baggage, for Honolulu, leaving Sarg installed for a three months' sojourn in his house.

THERE was a telephone in the bungalow. Sarg phoned the village store, ordering them to deliver a supply of groceries. He planned to cook breakfast and lunch in the bungalow kitchen and walk to the village restaurant for supper. Sarg, having once been a valet, knew all the fine points of bachelor cooking.

On that first afternoon he spent a really refreshing hour watering the lawn and roses. Toward evening he noticed a book on the porch table. He examined it and found that it was a sea story, "Ship Ahoy!" by Captain Drake. It was the novel which his host, Hazleton, had been reading at Sarg's intrusion.

Sarg strolled with it into the library to read it himself. After reading a score of pages he was interrupted by the arrival of his groceries from the village. He marked the page by dog-earing an upper corner of it—turning down a small triangle of the page corner—and laid the book aside to receive the groceries.

He came back to the book and read another score of pages. At dusk he again marked his place by dog-earing a corner of the page, laid the book aside and walked a mile to the village. After supper he returned home and made a roaring fire on the hearth. He donned lounge robe and slippers and stretched luxuriously in a Morris chair.

With a sigh of contentment he reached for "Ship Ahoy!". He found his place, read on, although to Sarg the yarn was only mildly interesting. A detective story would have suited him better.

Finally he came to page 60, which was the page Gerald Hazleton had been reading when interrupted by the arrival of Sarg. This was evident because Hazleton's bookmark was between pages 60 and 61.

Sarg recalled seeing Hazleton take a random scrap of paper from his pocket and mark the place with it, no doubt thinking that the interruption would only be brief after which he could resume reading.

The random scrap of paper, Sarg noticed, seemed to be the first sheet of a longhand epistle from one cousin to another. It was dated at New Orleans a week before and began— "My Dear Cousin Gerald:"

The sea yarn was beginning to bore

Sarg and he paused to eavesdrop, idly, on this cousinly letter. Its text ran:

> I agree with you that something ought to be done about old Uncle Jack Hazleton. Plague take his miserly old hide! He needs a keeper. But what can we do? Every time one of us suggests he put his money in a bank he flies off the handle, cusses us out, delivers a lecture on the villainy of banks in general, and claims insultingly that the only interest you and I have in his money is to inherit it.
>
> His money can go hang, for all I care, but I do hate to see the old codger make himself a setup for the first prowler who learns that he keeps thirty thousand in cash hoarded under a loose stone of his hearth. Personally I think he likes to count it every night before bedtime and fondle it. Poor fellow! It's the only love he ever had. His safety lies in the fact that only you and I, his nephews, know he has it. It wouldn't be so bad if he didn't insist on living in that lonely shack at Redwood Inlet, miles from . . .

Here the page ended.

Sarg let it drop from his hand, let the book also slither to the floor, and stared into the fire.

Thirty thousand dollars under a loose stone of a hearth! Sarg blinked.

In a lonely shack at Redwood Inlet! Sarg blinked again. In all his professional career he had never been tipped to anything quite so soft as this.

He stared for an hour into the fire. He recalled his resolve not to work during these three months. Yet temptation whispered. Could he pass up a chance like this?

It was a prowler's dream come true! Usually one had to case his job. Here was a job already cased. Usually one had to be content with odd bits of silver and jewels, hard to fence. But here lay thirty thousand in cash under the loose stone of a hearth.

Sarg picked up the scrap of letter which had been used as a bookmark and reread it carefully. Then he tossed it on the fire and watched it burn. He reasoned that Hazleton, when he returned from Honolulu after three months, would hardly remember anything about placing the bookmark; or if he remembered it, he would certainly not recall just what particular scrap of letter he had used.

The scrap was now burned.

Sarg took the book "Ship Ahoy!" to a shelf of the library wall and stacked it neatly among other books. He then looked about for an atlas. As the library was well stocked he had no trouble finding one. He turned to the map of California, a State suggested by the name Redwood Inlet.

He finally found Redwood Inlet on the map. It seemed to be about seventy or eighty miles up the coast from Oakland. All Sarg's fine resolve was swept away. He decided to make a quick trip to Redwood Inlet. He would rob the hearthstone of the old miser, Jack Hazleton, and then return to Corvado-in-the-Hills.

He waited two days. On the second morning he bought a newspaper at the village, and noted an item stating that Gerald Hazleton, the well known author, had sailed on the *President Grant* for Honolulu.

It was well to be sure that Gerald Hazleton had sailed, thought Sarg. For if the nephew had missed his boat, he might right now be paying a farewell visit to his uncle at Redwood Inlet.

During the two days that Sarg waited, he read a book. This time he chose Gerald Hazleton's latest mystery thriller, "Booked For Murder." It was a twister with thirteen suspects and Sarg was quite engrossed. Yet he was a slow reader, seldom covering more than twenty pages at a sitting. Each time he laid the book down he marked his place by dog-earing an upper corner of the page.

The second day was Friday, a day on which the branch train ran the round trip from Corvado Junction. Sarg planned to be on it. He packed a commodious alligator hide satchel with a few belongings, such as an extra shirt, his toilet articles, a flashlight, an automatic pistol and a jimmy for prying windows. These hardly covered more than the bottom of the satchel. The main reasons for taking it were, first, that a neat bag always lends plausibility to a traveler by train; and second, that thirty thousand dollars in cash loot would probably be bulky and thus need a large container.

He telephoned the village garage and ordered a taxi to call for him an hour before train time. Better to leave openly and return openly, he thought. He could mention casually to the taximan that he was bound for Oakland to do a couple of days' shopping.

While he waited for the taxi, he picked up "Booked For Murder." He was now on page 217, as shown by the turned down upper corner of the page. Sarg read another chapter. He had just arrived at the high point where the detective had all thirteen suspects lined up in the parlor and was about to point an accusing finger, when the taxi honked outside.

Sarg, really keen to learn just which of those thirteen suspects had murdered the victim, was loathe to lay the book down. The taxi honked again. Sarg opened his satchel and placed the book within, on top of the jimmy with which he planned to open the window of the author's miserly uncle.

He locked the house and, with his bag, went out to the taxi, looking just as many inches of a gentleman as when this same taxi had set him down two days earlier. For it was the same boy in the same Ford car. On the way to the village Sarg let drop a casual remark about shopping in Oakland.

After an hour on the mixed freight he reached the main line at Corvado Junction. Another hour and he was ensconced in the smoker of a fast transcontinental train bound for Oakland.

He opened his satchel and produced the novel. Quite contentedly he read the next to the last chapter, in which the detective detected, and then the last chapter, in which the detective elucidated his detection.

A rattling good story, thought Sarg. He was about to replace the book in his satchel when a small rectangle of pasteboard, the seat check given him by the conductor, fell from among the pages. That, mused Sarg, might easily have caused him trouble. It was a clue of his trip and might prove that the book had been on a train. Sarg restored the train check to his hat band, where it belonged, and then shook the book to make sure that no other accidental bookmark had become lodged among the pages.

Having plenty of time, he went through the book carefully, page by page. He noted nothing except the fact that he had dog-eared about every thirtieth page. That would indicate that he had read the book. But what of it? He was willing to admit that he had read the book.

Making certain that there was no material clue lodged in the book, he restored it to his bag, placing it flat on the bottom, underneath everything else.

AT OAKLAND he rented a drive-it-yourself automobile. It was a second hand flivver coupé and, since Sarg left a deposit of a hundred dollars to insure its return, the renting agency was subjected to but small, if any, risk of loss.

At four o'clock Saturday afternoon he drove north up the coast, toward Redwood Inlet.

He reached Redwood Inlet an hour before dark. He saw only a deserted lumber mill, a general store and a group of shacks occupied by fishermen. Sarg did not stop. He drove on through the village, intending to spend the night at the next sizable town northward and from there scout the whereabouts of Uncle Jack Hazleton's cabin.

Luck, however, played into his hands before he had driven two miles beyond the inlet. He saw a galvanized iron box on a post beside the road. It was a rural delivery mail box. On it was rudely painted—J. Hazleton.

Fifty yards to the left of the mail box, beyond a rickety wire fence, stood a ramshackle cabin.

Sarg drove on, elated. He was saved a great deal of trouble and risk. There was now no need to expose himself at a hotel in the next town, no need to ask questions which might be recalled later and which might lead to his description being furnished the police.

He could do the job this very night.

Half a mile beyond the mail box Sarg came to the mouth of a wooded ravine of the shore hills. He turned into this ravine, parking his car well out of sight from the main road.

Sarg locked the car. He waited until it was quite dark. Then he walked through the woods, southerly over a low ridge, until he came near the cabin whose mail box was labeled J. Hazleton. His immediate purpose was to ascertain whether or not the old man had a dog.

If so, the maneuver would be delayed or complicated. Sarg would either have to poison the dog, shoot it or lure it away. His plan was to come and go without violence to the inmate of the house.

He watched the cabin, from whose window a light shone until ten o'clock. Then the light went out. Sarg saw or heard no sign of a dog. He was sure by now that there was no dog outside the house, although there might be one within.

After the light went out he crept closer. He came to an outshed which, by its smell, was a hennery. Sarg entered the shed and saw the black shapes of chickens roosting. He seized one by the legs and made off, running toward the woods.

The hen squawked raucously, exactly as it would have done had it been borne away by a four-footed marauder. Sarg dropped it and raced on into the woods.

At the cabin a door slammed. Sarg heard the high pitched shoutings of an old man. He heard the shouter running to his hennery. But he heard no bark of a dog. Therefore Sarg knew all that he wished to know—that there was no dog on the premises. The old man, he reasoned, would presume that either a fox or a chicken stealing tramp had tried to raid the hennery.

Sarg returned a half mile over the ridge to his parked car and waited until two o'clock in the morning.

He then opened his alligator hide satchel. From it he took the automatic pistol, the jimmy and the flashlight. He closed the satchel, but carried it with him as he walked back through the woods to the cabin. He felt certain that he would need the bag to carry away the bulky loot of thirty thousand dollars. Would it be gold? He wondered. Or currency? He hoped it would be currency, for the gold would weigh a great many pounds.

He arrived at the cabin and found its environs as quiet as a tomb. The half of a moon shone through the trees. In the dim light of it Sarg could make out the exterior façade of a chimney at one end of the cabin. The chimney was important because it told him in exactly what room he would find the hearth.

The cabin was long and narrow. At the opposite end of it from the chimney Sarg saw an open window. Being a practised prowler, he knew the significance of a window being left open at night. It meant, almost invariably, a ventilated sleeping room. Good, thought Sarg. The old miser's bedroom was at one end of the house, the hearth at the other.

Sarg crept to a window which was only a few feet to the left of the chimney. It was locked. Sarg produced his jimmy. Being an expert, in less than ten minutes he had opened the window with hardly a sound.

He played his flash into the darkness of a room. The room contained no bed. There was a rude table, chairs, a cabinet, a cook stove and a hearth. At the far end was a closed door. No doubt the old man was sleeping beyond that closed door.

Sarg crept through the window with his satchel. He went directly to the hearth, the apron of which was of flagged stones reaching about six feet out into the room. In what a fool's paradise of security the old miser was sleeping, thought Sarg. Yet why shouldn't he feel secure? Naturally he would feel secure because only two honest nephews, one in New Orleans and the other *en route* to Honolulu, knew of the cached hoard. Certainly no ordinary prowler would suspect this poverty marked cabin worth

entering. And even if a prowler did break in, he would spend his time rifling drawers and shelves, quite overlooking the stones of the hearth.

Only the chance tip of Gerald Hazleton's bookmark had revealed the cache.

Sarg set to work. One by one he felt the stones. He had covered all of the upright ones from floor to mantel and was engaged in exploiting the flagged stones of the floor apron when he heard, or thought he heard, a slight creak in the room beyond the far door.

Sarg stiffened. He extinguished his flash and drew his automatic gun.

He waited five minutes during which he heard no further sound. The old man, he decided, had merely turned over in his bed. Sarg began feeling again, in the dark, the flagged stones of the hearth's apron.

His heart almost skipped a beat when he felt one which was loose.

He flashed his light on it. Yes, here was a square crack not filled with cement. He got the edge of his jimmy into the crack. He pried forcefully. One edge of the stone came up under the leverage. It was a flat stone, about a foot square and hardly two inches thick. A slab. Sarg slipped his fingers under it. He tilted it back. He leaned forward eagerly with his flash. Yes, here was a cavity under this stone.

And in the cavity was a metal box, not large, only about half the size of a shoe box. Sarg was disappointed. Plunder of such small bulk, he reasoned, could hardly be more than a few thousand dollars.

He drew the box from the cavity. It was heavy. Its content did not rattle, therefore it was entirely filled. It was an ordinary metal box, locked. Whether the loot was great or small, Sarg had no mind to count it until he was well away. He reached for his satchel.

Just then he heard a sound at the far end of the room. Sarg whirled. What he saw caused him to drop the money box and grab his automatic gun.

THE DOOR at the far end of the room was open. In the room beyond it was a lighted oil lamp on a table. Framed in the doorway, his back to the light, stood an old, bewhiskered man in night dress. He was sighting along the barrel of a rifle aimed at Sarg.

The old man pulled the trigger just as Sarg himself let fly with his automatic.

The two shots were as one. It seemed to Sarg, in his sudden panic, that he felt the shock of a bullet. Actually he was not hit. His own shot was inspired by panic, fired from the dark hearth as much by the tautness of his nerves as by the pressure of his finger. In all Sarg's career he had never before had occasion to enforce his thievery with a gun.

The gloom of the hearth saved him from the old miser's bullet. Sarg's bullet must have struck flesh, for the old man yelled and then pitched forward on his face. Sarg recoiled, pale and trembling, against the fireplace.

In a moment he crept forward with his flashlight to the prone figure on the floor of the room. He directed the flash downward. The figure lay quite still. Sarg did not know whether the man was dead, stunned or dying. He did not wait to find out.

With his handkerchief he wiped his pistol, flash and jimmy, then dropped all three of them to the floor. No fortune on earth could have induced him to take those tools of crime away with him. He knew that the gun would match the bullet embedded in the victim. If Sarg were searched, there must not be a single tool of crime on his person.

The money box, on the other hand, he might as well take. He could bury it this very night and with the utmost speed.

He went back to the hearth, snatched the money box and the satchel, leaped through the window and was gone.

He raced a half mile northward through the woods to his parked car. There he paused only long enough to crash the metal money box with a hammer taken

from the kit of automobile tools. He found money, all in big bills of currency. A few of the bills were of one thousand dollar denomination. Others were centuries. No bill was smaller than fifty dollars. After all, thought Sarg, this plunder might well be in the neighborhood of thirty thousand dollars.

He had removed the flivver's seat in order to get the hammer from the tool kit. Among other tools he now saw a short handled automobile shovel, equipment often carried by motorists to dig out a wheel when bogged in mud, especially in California, a State where cars are not allowed to enter certain forest zones without both a shovel and an ax. Sarg was impatient to get his plunder buried. He was, for all he knew, retreating from murder. Therefore not a single clue must remain in his possession.

He entered the car and drove out of the ravine to the main road. He drove south along the beach highway, past the scene of his crime, on through the village of Redwood Inlet, southward, gaining speed all the while. He looked at his watch. It was 2.40 A. M. At this hour the road was almost deserted. Only four cars passed him in ten miles.

He drove an hour. When he was about thirty miles south of Redwood Inlet he turned off into a grove of eucalyptus on the landward side of the road. The soil was sandy. With his shovel he dug a hole about two feet deep at the base of a huge, scaly eucalyptus tree. He buried the money box, filled the hole with earth. Then he carefully noted the landmarks of his cache.

He was certain that he could find it again. The safest plan, he decided, would be to leave the money box buried for the entire three month period of his tenancy in the bungalow of Gerald Hazleton at Corvado-in-the-Hills. That would allow the crime to get cold. For the next three months his cue was to reside peacefully at the Corvado bungalow, free from every incriminating circumstance.

Before leaving his cache, he made certain that he was absolutely uncontaminated by evidence. The pistol, the jimmy and the flash he had abandoned at the crime. He had owned them for years; he knew that their ownership could not be traced. He now went through his pockets and brushed his person. He made certain that there was no clue in his pockets or sticking to his clothes which might indicate a visit to the cabin above Redwood Inlet.

What about the car? He looked it over, inside and out. Certainly there was nothing in or about the machine which might suggest his errand of thievery. Last he opened his commodious alligator hide satchel, brought along to transport the loot, but not used for the purpose.

No, there was nothing incriminating in the satchel. There lay his clean shirt and toilet articles, with the novel, "Booked for Murder", lying flat underneath everything. The novel he had not touched since finishing it on the train coming into Oakland.

So he was absolutely safe! He closed the satchel, mounted the car and drove back to the road. With the loot buried and deserted he was breathing freely. He knew that even the old miser, Jack Hazleton, if he lived, would not be able to identify the prowler seen kneeling in the gloom by the hearth.

In fact Sarg knew that there was only one possible mental lead which could even faintly bring suspicion to his own door. That was the bookmark left by Gerald Hazleton in "Ship Ahoy!" The bookmark was destroyed. What were the chances of Hazleton's recalling the nature of that bookmark, placed absently in the book? Less than one in a thousand, thought Sarg. And even if he did, what then? It would prove absolutely nothing on Sarg. Over all that, Gerald Hazleton was at sea on a ship, getting farther from California every hour.

At dawn Sarg arrived in Oakland. He bought a Sunday morning paper. In it he found no mention of the Redwood Inlet burglary. He reasoned that the

paper must have gone to press at about the time the crime was committed.

He went to a cheap hotel, took a room, shaved, slept four hours.

He arose, ate at a restaurant, returned the coupé to the rental agency and redeemed his hundred dollar deposit.

That afternoon he went to a theater. At night he took a train for Corvado Junction.

At the Junction, Monday morning, he had an hour's wait before the departure of the mixed branch train for Corvado-in-the-Hills. He expended it in the reading of the Monday morning edition of the Corvado Junction Herald.

There he found an account of the Redwood Inlet crime.

Old Jack Hazleton, he learned, was dead. Sarg winced. Murder lay athwart his soul, black, ugly, irremediable. The old man, he read, had been found dead by neighbors at noon Sunday. Shot between the eyes. The condition of the body, stated the account, indicated that he had died some time during the night.

The assailant's pistol, jimmy and flash were found in the room. The motive seemed to be burglary, since a slab of stone was found gouged from the hearth's apron, leaving a cavity exposed beneath.

Sheriffs were on the job. The old man had only two relatives, both nephews, one in New Orleans and the other *en route* to Hawaii. Both of these, stated the account, had been wired. A further item mentioned that the nephew at sea was none other than the well known novelist, Gerald Hazleton of Corvado-in-the-Hills.

As he read, beads of sweat formed on Sarg's brow. Yet a hundred times he assured himself that he was absolutely safe. There was no weapon, loot or clue on his person. And still he shivered; he was a mere porch climber unschooled in the sternness of murder. He pulled himself together, rubbed his hands and his pale cheeks to induce circulation, threw the paper away, took his satchel and boarded the branch train for Corvado-in-the-Hills.

IN AN hour he was there. He found the Ford taxi with its ever alert boy chauffeur. In this he drove to his rose bowered bungalow a mile above the village.

His fingers were all thumbs as he let himself in with the key. Inside, the library seemed gloomy and cold. He set the satchel down by the hearth, went out for wood and built a fire in the fireplace.

All afternoon he remained by the fire, fearful at times for no reason at all, prodding his mind for some forgotten misstep of his crime, reviewing every detail of his action for some misplaced clue to his guilt.

He could conjure up none. Finally he assured himself that the murder of the Redwood Inlet miser would be forever an unsolved mystery. As for the plunder, let it lie for three months. Least of all should Sarg vacate this lease until it had properly expired. Suspicion, he knew, always falls on him who runs. Here he would sit pat for three months, watering roses, reading books.

At dusk he walked down to the village for supper. When he returned he went directly to bed. He donned pajamas, then stepped into the bathroom to brush his teeth.

There he recalled that his toilet articles were in the alligator hide satchel and that he had left it in the library.

He went to fetch the satchel. The only light in the library came from a few live coals on the hearth, but Sarg easily found the bag. He was about to pick it up when he remembered that the novel "Booked for Murder" was in the bag. It properly belonged on a library shelf. Sarg opened the satchel, found the book, which was underneath everything else, just as he had placed it after reading the last chapter on the train. He now shelved it in a row of similar books. With the satchel he returned to his bedroom, brushed his teeth and retired.

For a week he did nothing but water the roses, loaf, eat, sleep and read.

By later editions of the San Francisco papers he learned that the sheriffs at Redwood Inlet had unearthed no clue as to the identity of old Jack Hazleton's assailant.

He learned also that the New Orleans nephew had arrived in California to attend the inquest and funeral of his uncle. He further learned that the other nephew, the author, had been wirelessed in care of his Orient bound ship, but, since the ship had to go on, Gerald Hazleton had not been able to return either to attend the funeral or to superintend the criminal investigation.

Later accounts mentioned that Gerald Hazleton, now that he was in Honolulu, would remain there for the period of twelve weeks originally planned.

Every day and every hour Sarg felt safer and safer. He watered his roses with the convincing fervor of a home lover, and no one disturbed his peaceful isolation. After awhile he saw no further news items about the Redwood Inlet murder.

Every evening he read. He read all the mystery novels he could find on the shelves. Each time he finished a period of reading he turned down an upper corner of his page, thus marking the place.

Naturally he did not again take down from the shelves the copy of "Booked for Murder." He had read it, and no one ever reads a mystery story twice.

Ten weeks slipped by while Sarg lolled in easy, bachelor comfort. The expiration of his lease approached. He had promised Gerald Hazleton to occupy the house until Hazleton's return. And the longer Sarg delayed in digging up the money box in the eucalyptus grove north of Oakland, the safer he would be.

When the lease lacked but one day of expiring Gerald Hazleton came home.

He popped in bag and baggage on Sarg. He was as brown as a berry from ten weeks in the islands.

He greeted Sarg with the utmost cordiality.

"Only landed yesterday," he announced. "A friend of mine was motoring from Frisco to Yosemite and he just now dropped me off at the village. You don't mind if I intrude a day ahead of schedule, do you?"

"Not at all," returned Sarg. "For that matter I can vacate right now, if—"

"By no means," interrupted Gerald Hazleton. "You've bought the premises until tomorrow and, besides, there's no train on the branch until tomorrow. It's I who intrude, not you. Well, we have two bedrooms—plenty of space for us both."

In the evening Hazleton insisted on taking Sarg down to the village restaurant and buying him a steak dinner. They returned to the bungalow after dark and made a roaring fire in the library.

"Have a good summer?" inquired Sarg politely.

"Not so good," answered Hazleton a trifle gloomily. "Before I even reached my destination along came a wireless with the sad news that a kinsman had been shot and robbed. It was too late to turn back, so I went on. But the thing sort of gave me the heeby-jeebies all summer."

Sarg, after extending his sympathies in exactly the correct tone of restraint, inquired if the kinsman's assailant had ever been apprehended.

"They never found hide nor hair of him," informed Hazleton with a degree of bitterness. "Well," he added, "I think I'll read until I get sleepy and then go to bed."

Sarg sat down before the fire and lighted his pipe. He saw Hazleton stand before a book shelf and run his eye along it as if seeking some particular volume.

"It seems to me," ruminated Hazleton more to himself than to Sarg, "that I was reading a sea yarn the day you showed up. Might as well finish it now. I think it was 'Ship Ahoy!' by Captain Drake. Umph! Yeah, here it is." Hazleton took the book down and went to an easy chair by the table.

"You must have a pretty good memory," suggested Sarg, "to resume reading a book after a three month layoff. I should think you would have forgotten the place."

"Oh, I generally mark the place," laughed Hazleton. "But," he added a moment later, after thumbing through the pages, "here's once when I failed to do it."

Sarg was content. It was obvious that the single clue by which suspicion might have been directed to his own door was forgotten by Hazleton. He saw Hazleton turn uncertainly to somewhere near the middle of "Ship Ahoy!", read a paragraph, frown, turn back ten pages, read again, frown, and after a few more blundering trials finally stumble on the place at which he had stopped reading the book.

No further word was spoken for an hour. Hazleton read absorbedly. Sarg smoked and stared into the fire.

Finally Hazleton yawned.

"Think I'll hit the hay," he said. Whereupon he did exactly what he had done on the occasion of his first encounter with Sarg. He took a page of a letter from his pocket, marked his place in the book with it and laid the book down.

Evidently it was a habit.

"Good night," said Hazleton cheerily, and left for bed.

Sarg remained there alone, smoking. He smiled. Hazleton and his bookmarks! The fellow had probably left a thousand of them in books; certainly he would not recall the character of any particular one after three months. Idly Sarg reached over and picked up the copy of "Ship Ahoy!" which Hazleton had laid down.

An inch or two of the bookmark was sticking out. An old letter! But suddenly Sarg happened to notice the printed letterhead of the sheet, a heading which was exposed beyond the rim of the book. The heading was:

GOLDEN GATE DETECTIVE AGENCY
SAN FRANCISCO

Sarg stiffened. Naturally he felt the pricklings of vague apprehension. So Hazleton had been corresponding with detectives!

He could not resist taking out the bookmark to read it. He found a typed business letter, dated at San Francisco a month before and addressed to Gerald Hazleton in care of Young's Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Dear Mr. Hazleton:

Upon receipt of your cable we applied all the efforts of our organization upon the mystery of your uncle's death. We have labored diligently but, I regret, futilely. Since the vandal left absolutely no usable clue, there is nothing we can do except frankly admit our inability to either identify or apprehend him.

Yours very sincerely,
Golden Gate Agency,
—P. H. JONES

Sarg, reading this, breathed a deep sigh of relief. He replaced the bookmark in the book and went to bed.

HE SLEPT restfully and awoke in fine spirits. After shaving, he went into the kitchen and cooked bacon, eggs and coffee for two. This was not the first time that Sarg, once a valet, had prepared a gentleman's breakfast.

Gerald Hazleton appeared shortly, bright and cheerful.

"I presume you wrote another novel in Honolulu," suggested Sarg, as he poured the coffee.

"Yeah," admitted Gerald Hazleton, "a sequel to "Booked for Murder". But hang it, Sarg, I haven't finished it yet. I'm stuck on the last chapter. To tell the truth, I can't convict my villain."

"You can't what?" inquired Sarg.

"My murderer's murder," explained Hazleton, "is so absolutely well planned that even I, the author, can't nail him to the mast. No one saw him do it; he left no clue at the crime; he hid the boodle and went far, far away; not a single lead of suspicion points to his guilt. What are you going to do with a mess like that?"

Sarg blinked. Was Hazleton baiting him? Looking closely, he could discern not even the faintest suggestion of guile.

The blond and youthful author looked up from his breakfast and his blue eyes smiled with perfect friendliness into Sarg's.

"Well," said Sarg, arising, "I've had a splendid rest here at your house these three months, Mr. Hazleton. I'm catching today's train for the Junction, so I'll go now and pack up."

Sarg went to the library and telephoned for the Ford taxi to call half an hour before train time. He then went to his room and packed his two bags. One of them was a suit case. The other was the same alligator hide satchel with which he had been equipped on his excursion to Redwood Inlet.

After packing, he lingered in his room until nearly time for the taxi to arrive. Then he took his two bags and went to the library seeking Hazleton for the purposes of turning over the keys and saying goodby.

He found Hazleton standing before a shelf of books. The author was smoking a curved stem pipe. His manner seemed unusually serious; one hand was in the pocket of his smoking jacket; in the other he held a book which he had just taken from the shelf.

Sarg saw by the title on the cover that the volume was "Booked for Murder".

"I see you've read it, Sarg," observed Hazleton, his blue eyes narrowing with a definite sternness as he looked upon Sarg. Sarg stood just within the library portal, a packed bag in either hand.

"Why, yes, and found it a rattling good yarn," he admitted.

"I knew you'd read it," returned Hazleton, "because you left your bookmarks in it." Hazleton's sternness seemed to increase.

Sarg flushed. He knew that the only bookmarks he had left in the book were the turnings down of upper page corners wherever he had stopped reading. He now realized that an author and book lover might mildly resent such a mutilation.

"I found the bookmarks," went on Hazleton, maintaining his level gaze. Suddenly he added sharply, "And that is the reason why there's a pronounced and suggestive bulge in the right hand pocket of my coat."

Icicles of panic chilled Sarg's spine. He looked at the right hand pocket of Hazleton's smoking jacket and saw a gun shaped bulge pointing squarely at himself.

"Sarg, drop those grips and elevate each and all of your ten fingers!" commanded Hazleton.

Sarg dropped the two grips which toppled to their sides on the floor.

"Quick — up with them!" snapped Hazleton. His tone was so compelling that Sarg knew he meant business. Half frozen with fright, he raised his arms.

Yet he managed a sickly smile.

"Your idea of a joke, I suppose—" he began.

"My idea of a murder clue!" cut in Hazleton bruskly. "Or a series of murder clues. The odd thing about it, Sarg, is that every single one of those clues *is a bookmark left in a book.*"

Was he crazy, wondered Sarg. Even in his panic he kept assuring himself that Hazleton at best could only be guessing. How could the man make anything out of the mere dog-earing of book pages? It would indeed suggest that Sarg had read the book, but Sarg was quite willing to admit reading it. In fact he had told Hazleton three months ago that he intended to read "Booked for Murder".

True, he had taken the book along on his excursion to Redwood Inlet. But what of it? The last time he had handled it was on a train thirty-four hours before reaching the scene of the crime. After finishing it, he distinctly remembered shaking it to make sure that he had left nothing among the pages. He had then placed the book on the very bottom of the bag and had not touched it again until arriving home.

"What are you handing me?" queried Sarg with an effort at truculence, although with a break in his voice. His eyes all the while were fixed on the menacing bulge at Hazleton's coat pocket.

"Three months ago," explained Hazle-

ton, "I left a bookmark in another book, 'Ship Ahoy!' Last night I sought to resume reading it. I found no bookmark. I blundered through the early pages looking for my place and finally, by the context, found it at page 61. While searching for it I observed that the upper corners of pages 20 and 40 were dog-eared, though no similar mutilations were to be found farther on through the book.

"My only thought at the moment was one of mild resentment against your minor vandalism of dog-earing my book. As for my own missing bookmark at page 61, I had not the faintest recollection of its nature.

"I read from pages 61 to 94, inserted for a bookmark the first random scrap of letter which happened to come from my pocket, closed the book and went to bed.

"Fifteen minutes ago I came here to resume reading. The continuity of the story did not make sense, and I noticed that the bookmark this morning was at page 98, whereas it should have been at page 94. I knew therefore that you had handled the book and bookmark. I can't prove that you read the letter, but you *might* have read it, replacing it in error four pages farther on. Keep each and all fingers high, Sarg. And if you think this bulge in my pocket is only my fist, I'll show you it's a gun."

Hazleton drew from his pocket an automatic pistol, holding its aim on Sarg. Sarg, pallid with fright, stared glassily at the gun.

"But," he protested feebly, "that's no case you're making out. It's only—"

"It's only," agreed Hazleton, "a trend of thought. It suggested to me what might have happened. It whispered to me that a carelessly forgotten bookmark might tip any crooked opportunist to a fertile field for crime. If you had eavesdropped on one of my bookmarks, you might have done so on another.

"I pondered. What was that other forgotten bookmark. Suddenly a shadowy possibility pricked my memory. I went back to my room, looked in my baggage and brought out what should have been a five page letter written me by a New Orleans cousin fourteen weeks ago. I now noticed that the first page was gone. Rereading the top of the second page, the text of the first page was recalled to me. Realization flooded over me that it was that same first page which I had used for a bookmark at my last reading of 'Ship Ahoy!'

"I returned here to the library. Still I had no case. I had only a trend of thought. Probably the thought would not have taken the trend in the first place but for your minor vandalism of dog-earing book pages. A small thing, Sarg, but to my mind it indicates an habitual disrespect of property. I returned here, brooding, hardly ten minutes ago, wondering if the lead was worth following up.

"A new point flashed to me. You dog-eared pages 20 and 40 of 'Ship Ahoy', with no further mutilations. Your next reading was therefore your last—and at page 60 a bookmark tipped you to thirty thousand dollars cached under a hearthstone. The fact that you ceased reading the book at about that place suggests that you found, from thence on, the bookmark more interesting than the book.

"Still," continued Hazleton, "I had only a trend of thought. And the only thing I knew definitely was that it is your infernal habit to turn down upper page corners. Rather in a hostile mood by this time, I wondered if you had so dog-eared all the books on my shelves.

"I remembered that you had expressed an intention of reading 'Booked for Murder'. It was within my reach, so I took it down. Here it is."

All this while Hazleton had been holding "Booked for Murder" in his left hand. The title cover was toward Sarg. Sarg for the life of him could not imagine toward what goal his accuser was driving.

"I opened it," resumed Hazleton, "and, sure enough, about every twenty or thirty pages throughout the book you had turned down an upper corner. But that isn't all. You left a material book-

mark in the book— Keep those hands high, Sarg, or I'll shoot you as dead as you shot my Uncle Jack!"

The lines of blue showing from beneath the narrowed lids were now deadly. Sarg knew that if he tried running, Hazleton would shoot, and to kill.

"I can now picture you," went on Hazleton, "a thief in the night, kneeling by my uncle's hearth to steal his hoard. He must have heard some slight sound, and thus came to his lighted bedroom door with his .32 rabbit rifle, the only weapon he had in the house.

"He fired. You fired. You were in gloom and he missed. He was against light and your own bullet was fatal. But the fact that he fired a shot is known because the rifle, with an empty .32 shell in it, was found beside his body. Yet no bullet was ever found near the hearth. Sarg, keep those arms extended upward, but glance down at the bottom side of your alligator hide satchel!"

Sarg, his senses reeling, looked down. The satchel lay on its side at his feet, its bottom toward Hazleton. Sarg saw a small hole in the leather of the bottom of the bag.

"And lying flat on the bag's bottom, title cover up," summed up Hazleton, "was the book, 'Booked for Murder'. The bullet penetrated to page 113, and is still there. See?"

He opened the book. A score of its pages, however, remained in a sheaf, held together by what was in effect a lead rivet—the bullet fired upon Sarg by Sarg's victim—old Jack Hazleton.

Sarg dived for the library door. Hazleton squeezed the trigger of his gun. Something burned in between Sarg's third and fourth rib; he collapsed heavily to the floor.

"Central," he heard Hazleton saying into the library phone, "connect me with Sheriff Martin at the Junction . . . . This you, Mr. Martin? . . . . This is Jerry Hazleton. I caught the Redwood Inlet burglar right in my own house . . . . Yes, come right over please. I want him booked for murder."

BUSHMEN

By

LAWRENCE G. GREEN

ONE DAY in Windhoek, in the old German "Palace of Ink" on the hill where dwell the new rulers of South West Africa, I was given a map. It was found in a dusty cupboard, this rough diagram of Ovamboland and the forbidden territory of the Kaokoveld. Adventure stared out of every straggling line marking dry river bed and waterhole, mountain and native trail. For this map was made nine years ago by an explorer, the only white man who had ever penetrated the unknown country in the north of the protectorate from Etosha Pan to the sea. Here is one of the last hiding places of the Bushmen.

In Cape Town the other day I met a young doctor who had just spent eighteen months in the mysterious country of my map, a country to which very few names have been added since the map was made. He was Doctor J. H. Lots. His work as medical officer of the territory, which is about the size of Ireland, has brought him close to the far edge of things.

There are in Ovamboland only one white trader, three or four white officials, and here and there a medical mission where warm hearted people from the cold shores of Finland are fighting the diseases of the tropics. The Kaokoveld is beyond the police zone. No white man lives there at all; and none may enter without a permit from the administrator. It is the home of elephants—so many that, seen against the horizon, they sometimes resemble the moving coaches of a railway train.

Cut off from the northern outposts and rail heads by a belt of sand and thirst, the little white colony of Ovamboland lives among two hundred thousand natives of seven tribes. News of Ovamboland drifts through to the outside world after months, and then is often found only in government blue books. A famine in which thousands perished some years ago hardly received a paragraph in the South African newspapers. All sorts of stirring adventure are encountered —yet the book telling of this last unexplored corner of Southern Africa has still to be written.

Doctor Lots had his headquarters at Ondongua, where the native commissioner lives and where all Ovambos bound for the copper mines at Tsumeb are recruited, examined and given rations for the long journey on foot. Danger stalks constantly beside the little bands of natives plodding across the brown wastes to the mines. In a land where water means life a waterhole is a sacred place. The Bushmen, most primitive of all Africans, look upon certain waterholes as their own; and the stranger who drinks there is put to death. The law of the wild still runs in Ovamboland. How many unhappy natives have been butchered along this dry route from Ondongua to Tsumeb for wetting their swollen tongues at these stagnant waterholes will never be known. Officials traveling by motorcar have been horrified to find skeletons in the pools.

Police patrols sent out to arrest Bushmen have not one chance in a thousand. The Bushmen fade into the desert that is their home, hiding as surely as the python or the lizard. Once it happened that police on camels stumbled across a band of Bushmen who at a waterhole had killed Ovambos with poisoned arrows. The wizened dwarfs were brought before a magistrate and sentenced to imprisonment. But the wise order was made that if the prisoners showed signs of dying in captivity they were to be released immediately. Bushmen live in the complete freedom of wild animals, to which they are closer than any other human beings, and the contrast of prison life is more than they can bear. They pine away and die.

Bushmen, says Doctor Lots, are losing their fear of the white men. There are still roving bands in the Kaokoveld who have never seen a white face; but many others, still primitive, have learned to follow hunting parties for the scraps of meat that are left. Meat means more to them than anything else in life. The man who comes between them and their kill is lucky if he escapes death.

A farmer out hunting on horseback in a remote district of South West Africa saw a hartebeest fall. He had not fired. When he reached the buck a tiny Bushman stepped out from cover, pointed to the hartebeest, then to himself. He had wounded it with a poisoned arrow the day before and followed it ever since. Bushmen run with incredible speed. After two miles at top speed they are still fresh, and it is said that they can cover forty or fifty miles a day.

They are vindictive little creatures. A German farmer who shot several Bushmen near Okahandja before the war is still plagued by them. His cattle are raided, while his neighbors are left in peace.

Bushmen are pure hunters, detesting farm work. Yet so great is their love of tobacco that on one farm where tobacco is grown there are Bushman laborers. They do not like any one to shoot lions. When they hear a lion roar at night, booming the triumph of a kill into the darkness, they point an arrow in the direction of the sound and sleep again beside their fires. That arrow is the signpost to meat.

"The lions are our hunting dogs," they will tell you. The lion feeds daintily, leaving much for the hungry human prowler.

Doctor Lots tells of a boring engineer, at work near the border of South West Africa and Portuguese Angola, who found a baby Bushman near his camp. The parents, threatened with famine, had abandoned the newly born boy. The engineer decided to adopt him. He fed the baby on condensed milk and watched it thrive. The doctor was anxious to take charge of the experiment, but the engineer would not part with his strange pet.

Will the Bushman child lose the instincts of his race in civilization? He is three years old now; and the doctor believes that in a few years he will vanish one day. He will wander out into the desert, guided by some uncanny sense of direction, and so return to his own people somewhere in the unexplored heart of that strange country, to one of the blank spaces on the explorer's map.

KING *of the* WORLD

"DORJE is coming—Dorje is coming to be King of the World!"

Like the ominous mutter of distant thunder that cry swelled through Cairo—and cable after cable announcing the crumbling of governments, warships exploding at their anchorages, tumbling money rates and harvests burning in their warehouses, all added to the stark horror of the issue confronting civilization.

Pitted against the diabolical ingenuity of the man who believed himself the reincarnation of Solomon, and who planned to make the world his own, were James Schuyler Grim, that soldier of fortune known everywhere as Jimgrim; Jeff Ramsden, a veritable whirlwind of brawn and muscle, the lifelong friend of Grim; and I, Major Robert Crosby, who was drawn into this incredible adventure more by chance than volition.

At Grim's decision to take the case against the half-mad inventive genius whose discovery—an energy converter—seemed destined to make less than useless all modern arms, his aides in past adventures rallied in Cairo. Colonel McGowan of the British Army; Chullunder Ghose, the preposterously fat *babu* whose

A New Novel of Jimgrim

By TALBOT MUNDY

Trapped, Tassim revealed the hiding place of a number of Dorje's energy converters near the Pyramid of Gizeh . . .

That afternoon a woman was found dying of burns in the yard of the villa belonging to Tassim.

She proved to be the twin of Baltis whom, with her last breath, she denounced, saying it was she who was the trusted agent of Dorje. Grim took Baltis to the dead woman's bier that night—and was gratified to detect her trying to steal from the corpse a bit of parchment. Chullunder Ghose read aloud:

"Forty-five minus forty-five equals forty-five— Is this the key to Dorje's cipher?"

"That," replied Baltis, composed, "is for you to find out!"

mental agility was almost as great as that of Grim himself.

With our party was a woman who called herself the Princess Baltis, an international spy. Believing she had been the Queen of Sheba in a past incarnation, she claimed to recall past associations with both Grim and Dorje. She protested loyalty to Grim, but Chullunder Ghose discovered her talking with one Tassim Bey, known to be an agent of Dorje.

Grim then decided on a bold stroke. We would go to the Pyramid of Gizeh, pretending to be Dorje's agents, with British troops lying nearby.

Met by a monstrous host of cutthroats, it was obvious from the first that our ruse had failed—that our lives were in danger. But, strangely enough, it was Baltis who saved us—by suddenly crying out for all to bow before the Lord Dorje—and she salaamed profoundly before Grim!

In the turmoil that followed, I chanced upon a Chinese issuing from one of the mysterious passages that honeycomb the pyramid, carrying a machine that seemed to be a sound detector of some sort. Questioning proved fruitless and McGowan assumed charge of the machine, while I, suddenly realizing that no one guarded the entrance to Gizeh, started out.

Almost at my destination my scalp suddenly prickled. Somewhere ahead in the heavy dark I could hear footsteps . . .

CHAPTER XVII

"Harlem!"

ONE by one—there is no room for two at a time—eleven men, each one with a lighted taper in his left hand and a wave edged dagger in his right, came stealthily around the turn and paused before beginning the ascent. Although I was close to them I was probably quite invisible, unless the light from their tapers should gleam on a stud or a button. I closed my eyes as much as I could and still see, to prevent my eyeballs from reflecting light. And I tried to examine their faces; but that is not easy to do by smoky taper-light that makes incalculable shadows leap and intermingle in the throat of Gizeh.

I thought I could recognize one as the man who was sent by copper-belly to the entrance; and another, I was almost sure, was the man Aububah. If it was he, he knew Grim by sight and probably by name; he also certainly knew Jeff; and though he might mistake the princess for her sister, it was impossible to imagine him not denouncing Jeff, and Grim, too, the moment he should set eyes on them. There is no other way out of the pyramid—no possible escape. We were like rats in a trap. I could see the butts of revolvers protruding from more than one cummerbund. And I had no weapon.

Flocks of thoughts occurred to me, including the exactly accurate, unwelcome one that I was scared stiff. I could not imagine why McGowan had left the place unguarded, or why Grim had not ordered that motor truck with its officer, searchlight and squad of infantry to keep within hail. Excepting the two faces that I thought I recognized, the others all looked like those of Afghans, or at any rate of Northern Indians; and the only half-likely guess I could make was that these were the guards of the cache of thunderbolts, to whom Mahdi Aububah had run when we first approached the pyramid.

The man whom copper-belly sent to watch the entrance might have gone instead to bring Aububah back; these others might have insisted on coming also. But if so, where was McGowan's motorcycle cockney?

The men at the rear began to talk impatiently, obviously urging the others forward, although their words, in a strange tongue, reached me in a jumble of echoes. I had to stop them, somehow. It occurred to me that most of them were probably as scared as I was, and they had no means of knowing I was unarmed.

"*Ya ashab, min dí?*" * I demanded, suddenly remembering the silver case in which I always carry a few concentrated drugs for use in emergency.

I snapped the lid. It sounded like the click of a revolver being cocked. Nine of them, in panic, promptly fled around the corner of Al Mamoun's quarry hole. However, the other two came forward, which was not so satisfying.

It was not Aububah. It was not the man whom copper-belly sent to guard the entrance. I had never seen either of

*Ho there, who are you?

them. Holding the flashlight out at arm's length, so as to remain almost if not quite invisible, I switched it on full in the eyes of the first man.

He was no Oriental, although he was dressed in a cotton *amami*, smock and loin cloth, and his skin looked almost butter colored. His features were negroid, but a lot too intellectual and too nearly like a white man's not to suggest something other than jungle and desert. His resemblance to Aububah was vague after all; it almost vanished in strong light. His eyes, I thought, were used to spectacles, although he wore none at the moment. I could see one gold tooth.

"Harlem!" I said abruptly. Then, before he could answer, and forgetting for the moment that there are tough men where I did not doubt he came from, "Put that rod down butt first on the floor where I can reach it!"

HE WAS scared, or I should have died that instant. But he was as tough as they come. Instead of obeying, he pulled his weapon and emptied all six chambers at me. All six bullets clipped the stone within inches of where I crouched. The din in that narrow passage was terrific, and I suppose that scared the wits out of the man behind him, who fired too.

His first shot almost winged me. His second shot smashed his companion's backbone. He fired a third shot that seared the skin of my right forearm and went out through the sleeve at the elbow. Then he turned and ran!

I could hear all ten men scampering like frightened animals toward the entrance. But I could also hear hurrying footsteps behind me; and by the time I had seized the dead negro's revolver and reloaded it with shells that I found in the roll of his loin cloth, McGowan was almost on top of me. We went together to the entrance, but there were a million pitch-black shadows.

Any number of men could have hidden within fifty feet of us in the gaps of the pyramid courses. It was several minutes before we dimly saw dark forms hurrying across the sand toward the second pyramid.

Then Grim came, in a hurry.

"Are you hurt? Sure? Put some stinkum on it, anyhow. Who did the killing?"

I told him. He seemed to be listening to me, as it were, with one ear, and with the other to be alert for footsteps. But suddenly he concentrated on me.

"Listen, Crosby, I ought to have made things clearer to you. I wanted those men in here. That's why we left the entrance unwatched. They'd have had to duck to get into the Great Chamber. Jeff would have disarmed them one by one. If they had turned back they would have had to deal with McGowan behind them. Was Aububah among them?"

"No," I said, "but he might have been, and he'd have recognized you. He'd have told them you're not Dorje."

"That might have been a good thing," Grim answered. "It might have staggered that copper bellied fool; when he discovered what an ass he'd made of himself he might have blabbed all he knows. He hasn't told it all yet, by a long shot, but we have the signal, and we know as much as he does about Dorje's headquarters. We can get to Chak-sam on the Tsang-po without his help."

"Then we're off for Chak-sam?"

"Yes. Our objective is Dorje. The authorities can deal with Dorje's agents easily enough. They're fine tooth combing Cairo now, and the same thing is going on in a dozen countries."

"Then what are we waiting for?"

We were gazing through darkness that was the shadow of the pyramid, ponderous, seeming almost as heavy and solid as Gizeh herself. Beyond that zone of gloom the desert was made vaguely luminous by starlight. Away in the distance there were what looked like enormous fireflies, of which, however, there are none in that bone dry land. The long cordon of troops was at ease; men were lighting their pipes.

Grim did not answer, so I asked again—

"What are we waiting for?"

"For those men, who just now ran from you, to do something. I don't think they will dare to leave that dead man lying there; they'll want to bury him or dump him in the Nile. And they won't dare to wait until morning. If we've any luck they'll send Aububah to investigate. And if we're awfully lucky—just plain dog-lucky and my hunch is right—the man they may have come to meet may possibly be on his way to meet them."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know. But I suspect it could hardly be that copper bellied fool."

"Quiet!" said McGowan. "Here comes some one!"

And we ducked back into the total darkness within the entrance.

CHAPTER XVIII

"Forty-five—what silly piffle! I'm Bertolini!"

IT WAS NOT Aububah. It was some one in the pink of condition, who could spare the breath to whistle softly to himself as he climbed in the oppressive heat radiated by the pyramid. It was some one who knew the way perfectly, to whom almost total darkness presented no obstacle whatever. And it was some one either utterly devoid of caution or else so sure of himself as to feel that caution would be out of place.

The moment his head reached about the level of our feet Grim flashed a light full in his face, but he took no notice of it. He was a white man, wearing smoked spectacles. He had a short brown beard, carefully trimmed, and was very neat in his whole appearance. His hands were in the hip pockets of a suit of tussore silk, well tailored. Except for the spectacles he looked like one of those athletes who refuse to grow old and retire; a man of means, perhaps, who delighted in mountain climbing, or perhaps an explorer. He looked like a man whose self-assurance was the result of achievement.

"Bertolini!" McGowan whispered.

Every one who knows Egypt at all has heard of Walter Sandro Bertolini, the blind antiquarian so cordially hated by the dealers in antiques because he could tell the age of things by touch; well hated, too, by Egyptologists because of his irreverence for their opinions, and because of the intolerant originality of his own. There is hardly an important newspaper in any country that has not printed his vitriolic comments on the findings of men whose judgment is regarded as authoritative.

His own book on the pyramids of Egypt has been damned by almost every important critic in the world. The sort of man who would rather be wrong all by himself than right in good company, and yet who had the mortifying gift of being right so often that it was impossible to ignore him.

He had never told how he was blinded, never mentioned it; resented questions on the subject, prided himself on being able to dispense with eyesight. Certainly he had abnormally sharp ears; he heard McGowan's whisper.

"Yes," he said, "Bertolini. Forty-five years old this morning."

Grim answered him.

"So that forty-five years ago you were —?"

"Forty-five!" he remarked. "What silly piffle! If you know who I am, why go through all that rigmarole? I'm Bertolini. Who are you?"

"I'm trouble hunter No. 1," Grim answered, "sent to warn you. However, you'd better put me through the rigmarole. I might be a spy."

"Very well. How do you count nine?"

"Eight — six — four — one — nine — seven — five — three — two," Grim answered, "and the date being the thirtieth, the key is two-two."

"Which would that be?"

"Second volume of 'McClaughlin's Dictionary'."

"All right. Who is with you?"

"Baltis—among others."

"She is dead. I know it. Died in

hospital. Not hearing from her I naturally supposed there had been an accident, so I made my own inquiries. They were so secretive at the hospital that I knew she must be in there. I got the story from the nurse, who used to be a friend of Isidore Toplinsky, who works with Rothov."

I heard an old envelop crackle as McGowan wrote down both names.

"I told her to tell that story," Grim answered.

"Let me get my hands on you," said Bertolini.

GRIM pushed me. I stepped between them. Bertolini fingered me with the uncanny, supersensitive blind man's touch that suggests a portrait painter's stare and a surgeon's exploring finger tips combined in one.

"H-m! Military? What name?"

Grim, from behind me, rested his chin on my shoulder. "Major Robert Crosby," he answered.

"H-m! I advised Dorje to let the military alone. The time to undermine the armies of the world is when the panic sets in. Army men always go off half cocked. I suppose it's you who brought on this wretched fiasco in Cairo. I warned Dorje to let natural unrest take care of things, and let the communists and reds and radicals take the blame until the exact psychological moment. Has Dorje lost his wits?

"Here's Egypt rotten with nationalism, India seething, China committing suicide, the Kurds boiling over and being massacred by Mustapha Kemal so thoroughly that all Persia will go hysterical, Mussolini with a million Italians in prison, England, Germany, the United States with millions of unemployed, native unrest in South Africa, religious strife in Malta, civil war in Brazil and Bolivia, Russia reducing bread rations in order to buy machinery with which to stave off absolute bankruptcy, Australia flat broke, Japan so worried by internal politics that she's even willing to reduce her navy, Spain on the edge of a revolution, the French war party, Poland and Yugo-Slavia abetting them, itching to thrash Germany before Germany gets too strong, all Germany drilling under the guise of athletics—an almost perfect situation, not quite ripe but ripening faster every minute. . . .

"And that damned fool Dorje goes and spoils it all by this penny fireworks policy of blowing up cruisers and burning a bit of cotton in a warehouse!"

Grim pushed me aside, which was a relief.

"I was sent," said Grim, "to call a halt. The signals have not been coming through."

"Stuff and nonsense! They have. I've had 'em all," he answered. "I've relayed 'em. Effectively, too. Do you know of the riots in Alexandria? Caught the authorities napping—perfect! Scores of young students all over the world are learning to pick 'em up better and better. What's this idiotic rot about a listening machine?"

"It's on the blink," Grim answered.

"Smash it! Dorje must have lost his reason! If a machine can get the messages, we're done for! Some one will find the machine. Once found, they'll study it until they make a better one. You say Baltis is here? Let me talk to her."

Grim nudged me.

"Do you mind bringing her?"

But Bertolini heard that and objected.

"I'll go. None of your inspired conversations, thanks."

He pushed past Grim into the darkness, going much faster than a man with eyesight could have done. Grim and I overtook him kneeling beside the dead body of the Harlem negro.

"Idiots!" he sneered, without turning his head. He spoke as if he could see us with his shoulder blades. "Who killed Honey Foxman? Shot in the back! What had *he* done? Scared you? Good tough nigger. No harm in fifty of him! I could handle Honey like a pet dog! Do a lot of good in the United States;

sort that can start a riot in no time. Who shot him?"

"I did," Grim answered. "He was bragging too loud about his friend Bertolini."

"Is that so? Mentioned me by name? I wonder how he knew my name? He had never seen me. He knew me as the spirit of Rameses. I never spoke to him except in a dark room."

"How did you know it was dark?" Grim objected. "You can't even feel light."

"Idiot! There aren't windows in a tomb! I'm the voice in the tomb. I had Honey Foxman studying to be Master-magician of Osiris, reincarnation of Hamarchis and Captain of the Cohorts of the King of the World in the United States!"

GRIM took one of his intuitive long shots.

"Too many people know about that tomb. Honey Foxman bragged about it—one more reason why I shot him. I could walk right to it."

"Smart, aren't you?"

"Yes. It's my job to be. Is there room for fifty people in that tomb of yours?"

"Fifty? Five hundred."

"All right. Take Li Pu and his listening machine to your tomb. I'll send an expert with him. Study the machine and get it working; there are messages that neither you nor any one has been getting. There's no coordination. You're running one department, some one else another, and so on. Send out a call for your own men to come to the tomb—I mean the head men, not the rank and file—and I'll round up a lot of others. We'll have a conference. And from now on they shall all be directly responsible to you. Does Mahdi Aububah know the place?"

"That idiot? No. Baltis was supposed to get in touch with me, so that I could tell her to tell him where to deliver the thunderbolts. They should have been in my place long ago. If they had been, there would have been none of this premature rot and nonsense."

"True enough," said Grim, "but how are we to get them in there now without being caught?"

"I don't know," said Bertolini. He was still fingering the dead man's body, hunting for something hidden, and Grim was watching him. "I'm beginning to think we'd better blot out Cairo and have done with it."

"Maybe," Grim answered. "But let's get that machine working and find out first what Dorje has to tell us. Dorje sees things on a big scale. We can only see in detail."

"All right."

Bertolini had found what he was looking for. It was in the dead man's *amami*, which is a sort of turban. Whatever it was he slipped it into his pocket. Then he started forward. He had not gone more than a dozen paces before Grim said:

"Half a minute, Bertolini!" Grim caught him by the sleeve. "There's blood on you, off that negro. Take your coat off." Grim pulled the coat down over his back by the collar so that his arms were pinioned. "No, it's not blood after all—just dirt. Go ahead." He jerked the coat back in position.

"Damn you!" Bertolini remarked, without emphasis but with a coldly vicious intonation. "I will have you understand I don't like being touched!"

"I sympathize," said Grim. "I hate it, too. But blood on your coat, at a time like this—"

"You have picked my pocket!"

Bertolini faced us, livid with indignation. I turned the light full in his face but he seemed not to know it. Rage changed his entire expression; he looked like a maniac.

"Hand that thing back!"

"What thing? Perhaps you dropped it."

Grim held what he had toward the rays of the flashlight, so that I saw it, too. It was a tiny blue memorandum book of the kind that expensive jewelers give away as an advertisement. There were only a few words on each page in fine Italian

handwriting; but beneath them, and sometimes over them, the negro had scrawled other words in pencil.

"I never drop anything."

"Go back and look," Grim suggested. He pulled out his own notebook and I held the flashlight while he copied the entries. Bertolini, needing no light, retraced his steps fretfully, stooping to feel the granite floor with fingers that were as good as another man's eyes. Grim passed the memorandum book to me. I followed Bertolini and said—

"There—is that what you're looking for?"

"What? Where? Where is it?"

I DROPPED the little book on to the dead man's back—he was face downward—and at the same time made a noise on the stone with my foot so that his ears should not catch the sound of the book falling. Then I told him what I saw. He pounced on it.

"Hot!" he remarked. "I believe you had it in your fingers."

He hurried forward, muttering, and because he knew the way so well he soon outdistanced us, so that Grim had opportunity to whisper:

"Now we're all set! That's a list of the names and addresses of nineteen people. French, Greek, German, Italian, English, Egyptian. Bertolini seems to be the kingpin; that coon was his messenger, among other things."

Grim whistled — three notes on an ascending scale. The *babu*, carrying a lighted candle and looking like a potbellied Roman senator, came waddling down the grand ramp and met Bertolini midway.

"Salaam, sahib. This is King of England, doubtless. How is her Majesty? Yes? No? Thank you, I am very well. And if, as your Majesty says, I am damned, I am at least damned pleased to meet you. No, am obesity made manifest and can not make room for you or any one. No, you are mistaken. I am not that fool who is the temporary tenant. I came to count the money in the gas meter. It was not there. I suspect Queen Cleopatra of having come to life to collect more revenue for one of her gentleman friends. Are you the landlord?"

"Baltis!" Bertolini answered. "I will see her alone."

But Chullunder Ghose had already grasped the essentials of the situation; he had turned and scurried back ahead of us, and Grim said:

"Careful, Bertolini! Watch your step. There's been some oil spilled here; the ramp's as slippery as ice. Let me walk ahead of you."

"Oil?" he retorted. "Nonsense! I could smell oil fifty feet away."

But, as luck would have it, there had been some cooking done and some one actually had spilled oil within smelling distance. Bertolini sniffed, detected it and became a shade more gracious. He let Grim go ahead of him and Grim went slowly. By the time we reached the head of the ramp Chullunder Ghose had had ample time to use his fertile imagination.

At the top of the Grand Ramp there is a low passage about three and a half feet high that leads into a small ante-chamber, from which there is another short, low passage into the Great Chamber. Bertolini, negotiating the slippery summit with the ease of a cat, ducked exactly at the right moment without groping, stood upright the moment he reached the antechamber, crossed it, ducked again without groping and passed through the second passage. Grim remained in the antechamber, motioning to me to follow Bertolini.

THE CANDLES were all lighted, and some one had produced two oil lanterns as well. Jeff, with his back to the wall near the entrance, jerked his head to call my attention to two men who were not in the chamber at the time I left it. There could only be one possible explanation of that. Above the Great Chamber there are so-called chambers of construction, very difficult of access by means of

notches cut in the southeast angle of the Grand Gallery. They must have been in hiding up there; Jeff now had two revolvers, one in each hip pocket; he had disarmed them as they entered.

They looked like Hindus, and were filthy with bat excrement. One wore spectacles, the other was dressed as a European; and they both looked like young intellectuals of the kind who make the rounds of the universities before returning to India to envenom politics in the name of spiritual vision. Excitable, but not excitingly attractive men.

The princess, sick of the heat and tired of standing, was on the floor, on her own folded cloak, with her back to the wall, close to where Jeff stood. The others, except copper-belly, were all leaning against the wall; he leaned against the cistern, with his elbows on it, rolling his great head sidewise to watch first one and then another. Chullunder Ghose had already squatted on the floor at the right hand of the princess, close enough to her to whisper, although I doubt that he could have done that without Bertolini's keen ears detecting it.

Bertolini went straight to her, exactly as if he could see.

"Are you Baltis? Stand up. Let me touch you."

He held out both hands to her and she took them in order to rise to her feet. She was tired and the heat had lowered her vitality. His spidery fingers swept over her outline and then both hands touched her face.

"Yes, Baltis. Why didn't you come straight to me?"

"I have Dorje's orders."

"And a fine mess you've made of them!"

I could see Chullunder Ghose touching her shoe with his fingers; she kicked his hand away irritably. It may be that the momentary irritation, added to the insolently domineering manner of Bertolini, prevented her from playing her own hand. Anyhow, she craftily protected Grim, whereas she might have seized that opportunity to obstruct Grim by admitting that she did not know who Bertolini was, and then intentionally blundering to bring an awkward climax to a head. Perhaps she thought that opportunity was not sensational enough.

"One would think you were your sister," Bertolini went on, snarling. "How many times have you told me what a treacherous fool she is, obeying her own inclinations instead of orders. And now you do the same thing! Why the devil didn't you come to me?"

That stung her. There had plainly been a more than common jealousy between those twins. It made her hate the man who spoke of her sister's criticism. But she needed a clue as to how to answer him, so she still sparred for an opening, and I held my breath. I think we all did. If she had thought for a week she could not have imagined a retort more suitable.

"I was ordered to investigate you. Dorje is far from pleased with reports that have reached him. If you are wise you will make me a full report of all your doings."

"Oh!"

He became livid. His tyrannous temper so changed his expression that I thought for a moment he would seize her throat and try to throttle her. But he mastered his facial muscles and, in a moment, there remained only a smile of malignant cunning that he probably supposed was pleasant.

"Very well. Come now and see me. Come to my place."

"Tomorrow," she answered. "I am tired. I must sleep."

"Where?"

Chullunder Ghose spoke up for her.

"The sahiba will go to Brown's Hotel, Suite A."

Bertolini nodded.

"Who are you? Are you the fat fool who got in my way just now?"

"Am fat wise man. Am expert who invented formula that nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, makes forty-five; and one, two, three, four, five,

six, seven, eight, nine, makes also forty-five; and by subtracting one from the other we have self-same figures in another order, namely, eight, six, four, one, nine, seven, five, three, two—which once again is forty-five. Thus forty-five from forty-five *is* forty-five; and we have key to code which puzzles unintelligence departments of lots of governments. Therefore speak to me respectfully. Am Ph.D. of University of Guile. Am pundit plus."

"Are you the tinker who is to bring that listening machine to my place?"

"No, the thinker! Am appropriately learned expert to do any emergency job whatever. If the boss says sizzle on a hot plate, this *babu* invents asbestos anti-sizzelum pad, like camouflage on top side lid of Tophet, and squats as per invoice. Did the boss say, do it?"

"Yes. Where is the thing? Go get it."

"But how convey it to your honor's workshop?"

"I came on donkey back. You'll have to walk."

"Am good guesser. I guess I won't walk—not all that distance! Walk, and carry that thing? Hercules was penny-ante charlatan compared to this *babu*, but Hercules was what U. S. A. Yankees call sucker, whereas self am reincarnation of Adam, who let Eve pick apple, ate same and did not give her any."

"Nonsense!" Bertolini answered. "If the machine is as heavy as all that, put it up in front of me on the donkey. I and my donkey are well known and can get by the sentries unquestioned. You will get through, too, if you walk beside me."

"I don't wonder you need an investigation!" said the *babu*. "Which of you manages Dorje's business—you or the donkey? How do you suppose I came here? On a magic carpet? Do you suppose a big fat man like me, who can be seen from a mile away, would come to a place like this, on Dorje's business, without as good credentials as the king would have if he were traveling incog? I am supposed to be—in fact, I am—a trusted agent of the Indian Intelligence Department.

"Do you think Dorje employs only nitwits? Do you think *you* could have escaped police investigation if there were not more than one important personage on Dorje's secret list? I envy you your naive vanity! You believe yourself a crafty king pin, which must be very pleasant; but you are actually only a little piece of the machinery, under observation, and replaceable. I came here by motor car. So did this lady. We go back by motor car. And so do you. We drop her at the hotel. Then we go to your place. And if you think you are the only conversation salesman who can get through a line of sentries, you are going to learn something. You are safer with me than I with you."

"My donkey—I can't leave it here," said Bertolini. "It would be recognized."

"Can it ride in motor car? You need your brain investigated, not only your behavior! Your donkey shall be brought to you tomorrow—unless some one needs it for another purpose. Come on; let us get that instrument and go to your place. Come on!"

Out-bullied, the blind bully smiled malignantly, stared all around him as if he could see, turned suddenly and walked out, stooping under the low entrance without using his hands to feel his way. Baltis went next, hustled by Chullunder Ghose, who was in a hurry to get word with Grim. But Grim was no longer in the antechamber.

CHAPTER XIX

"So I will bring on all of us a tragedy, unless—"

BALTIS finally collapsed from a combination of heat and mixed emotions. I had to carry her down the ramp, in no way aided by the irritating dance of the electric lantern that Chullunder Ghose held as he hurried to overtake Bertolini and to find Grim. Jeff's

shout, from behind me, did not help matters.

"Look out for yourself, Crosby!"

Jeff, as I learned afterward, had stepped into the antechamber, on his way to the step at the head of the ramp, where he hoped the air would be better. As he ducked through the opening into the antechamber, both those bat fouled Hindus doused the lights and rushed him.

He collared one. The other scrambled out between his legs, but Jeff caught him by the foot and held on. Everything would have been all right if panic had not seized the crew that remained in the Great Chamber. It may have dawned on them that they had been fooled and had betrayed their master. At any rate, they rushed Jeff. And he could not use the revolvers; he had to give Grim time to send Bertolini away with Chullunder Ghose. Bertolini must not be alarmed. And heaven knows there was noise enough without revolver shots.

I had a flashlight in my pocket. To reach it I had to set Baltis down, and before I could use it the whole scrambling avalanche of hysterical humans was on top of me, with Jeff on his back in the midst of it. Two men's teeth were in his right arm—but I did not know that until afterward. His left fist, though men were hanging on to it, was going like a piston. So were his legs, though men were clinging to those too.

As a matter of fact, before he reached me, there were three men out of action, one dead, with his skull crushed on the edge of the granite step at the top of the ramp. That dead man was Ku-sho—copper-belly—but none of us knew it. Jeff was giving them plenty to keep them occupied. and he was using head as well as muscles. He had thought of the revolvers.

Naturally, every single one of those scrimmaging madmen had thought of them too. That was one reason why they were all on top of Jeff together. But he had thrown the revolvers away; one slithered past me, down the ramp; the other, though it sounds incredible, fell down the shaft up which Li Pu the Chinese was dragging wire when first I came on him. One man, who had a wave edged dagger, was so eager to grab a revolver that he forgot his own weapon until about the moment when the scrimmage reached me. When he did remember it he drew and plunged it to the hilt between the shoulder blades of the Hindu who wore spectacles, where it stuck tight. But that was another thing learned later on.

INSTINCT governed me. I picked up Baltis and tried to protect her. Down I went—down under them as the weight of all those scrambling men struck my legs, and I clung to my burden as we used to hug the ball on the football field, wishing some unexpected referee would blow his whistle. Fighting never did amuse me, anyhow. I believe Jeff likes it. Some one smashed me in the mouth, and I declare it was Jeff, although he says it wasn't because if it had been I would have no teeth left and it only loosened two. It felt like an eternity before we brought up, all in a pulsating heap together, at the wall at the foot of the ramp.

Then Jeff's prodigious strength had something firm to use for leverage. He was like an earthquake. I suppose I helped him, although I imagine not much; I was almost half out from the shock of that blow in the teeth. He hove that mass of humans off him something in the way that blasting powder heaves off débris. And he had his wind left, which was more than I had.

"Where's your flashlight?" he asked.

The flashlight answered him. I had dropped it when I went down under. I suppose it slid down with us. One of the Mongolians had picked it up and now he used it, directing the light straight at us, to his own undoing; Jeff's fist struck him like a hammer on the jaw and he crumpled, but the flashlight crumpled with him—smashed as it struck the stone floor.

However, that brief flash of light was actually all we needed and we were

safer in total darkness once we had the lay of things. Baltis was as limp and lifeless as a corpse, and I supposed she had suffered internal injuries in spite of my efforts to protect her. Jeff was bleeding. I knew I was, although nothing to matter. But the enemy were in a bad way.

Jeff's fists and feet had done terrific punishment, and they were not the sort of men who thrive on that stuff; whereas the more you hurt Jeff, the more deliberately he fights and the keener his sense of strategy, which sometimes does not fully wake up until he is rather hard pressed.

"Into the passage!"

He shoved me with his elbow. If there's fighting, you either jump when Jeff says jump, or you get moved on in spite of yourself, your self-esteem and your opinions. He takes full charge of operations. And he grins immensely afterward, if you should waste words on remonstrance.

There was nothing whatever for me to do but to back away into the darkness, carrying Baltis, who was not particularly heavy and who was beginning to show symptoms of returning consciousness.

Jeff backed down the passage after me, and we retreated step by step until we had passed the entrance to the Queen's Chamber. There Jeff halted and I heard his fist swat some one like a pole-ax; whoever he hit crawled into the passage toward the Queen's Chamber, and lay there calling to his friends; I think two, or perhaps three of them followed him, and Jeff let them go by because they were as good as out of action in that low, narrow tunnel.

And then Grim came.

"Are you fellows hurt? I was afraid Bertolini would hear the rumpus, but Chullunder Ghose clowned a panic and made enough din to drown yours. He almost carried Bertolini to McGowan's car. They're waiting for Baltis. Is she all right? Jeff and I will do the rest of this. Get her to the car. On your way back tell McGowan what has happened."

MY HEAD was a bit woozy, but by the time I reached the entrance and the fresh air I felt almost fit to carry Baltis back to Cairo. I believe I would not have minded trying!

I laid her on one of the pyramid courses and wondered whether it would be safe to strike a light in order to look through my pocket kit of first-aid remedies.

There was no sign of McGowan. I could hear what sounded like a motor truck, but it was impossible to judge its direction or how far away it might be. Baltis, as most normally healthy people do, had begun to recover the moment that decently breathable air reached her lungs and it is one of my heretical theories that nature, once stirring, is best left to her own devices; so I put back the kit, proposing to give her about two minutes before carrying her farther. However, I overestimated her need. She sat up without help and spoke low but audibly, which was a very certain symptom of returning strength.

"Where is Jeemgreem?" I answered her. "Do you think he will trust me now? I could have betrayed him. I could have caused you all to be killed. I could have escaped with those men; and I could have done much work for Dorje elsewhere. Now, do you think, will Jeemgreem trust me?"

I answered I was sure he trusted her.

"What do you do with me now?" she demanded.

"To the hotel."

"You tell Jeemgreem I am not so simple as he imagines. I love him. But the big fight comes, which he shall not win unless he also loves me."

It was a strange time and place to discuss the strategy of love, in which some idiot has said that all is fair. But she seemed on the verge of revelation, and although Chullunder Ghose was waiting and probably half frantic with impatience, I cast about in my mind for an answer that might tempt her to indiscretion. However, there was no need. She continued.

"Tell Jeemgreem this. I like to die dramatically, as I always did. And I don't in the least mind dying, because I know there are plenty of future lives in which to continue love affairs, which would be very tame if they were without tragedy once in awhile. So I will bring on both of us a tragedy if he attempts to leave me in Egypt!"

Interesting but not important as I saw it at the moment. So I picked her up and carried her as fast as I could toward where we had left the car, and she was stubbornly silent.

When I told Grim afterward about that conversation he took it seriously and said he would not dream of leaving her behind, and always after that he treated her with a shade more show of confidence than formerly.

However, for the moment she had Chullunder Ghose to deal with—and he was as full of exasperation as a boiling kettle, from having Bertolini on his hands and from anxiety to get away before the Italian could learn what a cunning trap he was in.

The chauffeur was a thoroughly reliable old-timer of McGowan's, stupid enough to take no interest in anything but food and wages, clever enough to seem more stupid than he was in order to avoid mistakes; so there was no anxiety on his score. But there was an awful risk that some more of Dorje's men might appear at any moment and give the game away. Bertolini was suspicious, and as I drew near the car I heard Chullunder Ghose say to him—

"As to that, we will see what messages we get when this instrument is put in order."

They had the thing on Li Pu's lap on the front seat and the Chinese was hugging it as if it were his child. The moment I opened the car door and began to help Baltis in the *babu* turned on me and used me to help bolster Bertolini's waning self-assurance. He damned me like a criminal and concluded his outburst with a shouted warning:

"You keep this important agent waiting while you philander in the darkness! Just because you heard me say I will investigate him you forget that he is the head man here until, or unless removed by direct order from headquarters! I will report you to the Lord Dorje himself as one who grows slack at a critical moment!"

Then he nudged me by way of apology, as if that were necessary and turned his tongue loose on the princess, who was much less likely to endure his impudence, her sense of humor having had a hard seige that had in no way undermined her self-esteem.

"Damn you!" he exploded. "You women! You keep everybody waiting, always! If the King of the World succeeds in spite of women he will work a miracle! I have told him that not once but many times! If he fails, it will be because of a woman—I have told him that, too!"

She perfectly understood that he was merely talking for Bertolini's benefit; and the importance of keeping the blind man deceived until we had uncovered his system and all its secrets must have been equally clear to her. It is not likely, either, that she had forgotten Bertolini's comments on her own shortcomings and she probably understood she was in danger from him. But she could not resist her natural impulse to annoy the *babu* and, if possible, to make his blood run cold with foreboding.

"So you are sometimes right, are you?" she retorted. "Yes. Dorje's fate is in a woman's keeping ever since he announced himself! Yours, too!"

"What is that—announced himself?" Bertolini demanded.

But then the car moved off and I was left standing, wondering what new dilemma was in store for our ingenious *babu*.

I wished I had kept Baltis with us. She could have ridden the donkey. If she had happened to get killed we could have spared her it seemed to me. I had already forgotten that I felt sorry for her.

CHAPTER XX

"It's only being caught off-stage that actually hurts."

LIKE most successful men of action, McGowan had a genius for choosing his assistants. If a less efficient and alert man than Lieutenant Allison had been in command of that motor lorry with its searchlight and squad of infantry, that night would probably have been our last on earth. However, I must explain what had happened.

After listening to learn what line Chullunder Ghose would take with Bertolini and having assured himself that copperbelly and his gang were not being troublesome, Grim left the antechamber and hurried for a conference with McGowan at the pyramid entrance. On his way he paused long enough to force Li Pu to carry his machine into the open air, leaving the wire where it lay. At the entrance Grim had yielded to McGowan's protest that it was unsafe to neglect those visitors who had fled when Honey Foxman was shot in the back. They agreed it was time to signal for the motor lorry, and to do that McGowan had had to make a circuit of the pyramid which takes time.

He did not dare to signal from the entrance, because of the risk of being seen by Dorje's men, and there was the added difficulty that he did not know exactly where the lorry was in hiding. So, as I say, he made a circuit—and then climbed the pyramid—no mean feat in total darkness.

From the summit he had only dared to make three or four quick flashes, but he had been answered instantly, and by the time he had returned to the foot of the pyramid Lieutenant Allison and the lorry were almost within hailing distance. However, he did not dare to hail them; Dorje's men might be lurking anywhere in the shadows.

So he took the lesser risk of walking out to meet the lorry, getting in its way and hoping rather than expecting not to be shot by some keen eyed rifleman. Luckily, Allison spotted him, and McGowan got into the lorry.

I am not quite sure that McGowan had not lost patience with Grim's peculiar tactics, although he never dropped a hint of it, that I heard. At any rate, with or without Grim's concurrence, he had decided on a clean-up; and one of the most marvelous things I have ever seen was the instantaneous, mechanically perfect response of that cordon of troops from the moment when the lorry went into action. Some one higher up had trusted McGowan implicitly.

As the lorry approached the south side of the pyramid McGowan ordered the searchlight into action. It flooded all the lower courses of the masonry with a white glare in which hardly a snake could have hidden. It was answered instantly by a revolver shot from one of Honey Foxman's gang lurking somewhere in a gap in the broken masonry; he probably aimed at the lens in the hope of smashing it, but he hit the driver of the lorry, whose crew cut loose with a machine gun, while Allison himself took the wheel and two men picked up the wounded man.

Then the lorry came on again, spurting rifle and machine gun fire and wiping out the shadows with its roving eye. One moment there was a broad path of light in front of it; the next it was sweeping the pyramid; and there must have been twenty-five or thirty men in hiding, every one of whom aimed at the light and tried to smash it with revolver fire. Each shot from the pyramid courses was instantly answered by a belt or half a belt from the machine gun, and in the glare from the light I saw several men come tumbling headlong.

TWO thoughts worried me. One was, whether the car containing Chullunder Ghose and Bertolini was already far enough away to permit the *babu* to invent a plausible enough explanation of the firing, which the blind man's sharp ears could not fail to detect. The other was that the searchlight would inevitably sweep in my direction in a moment.

There was nothing to distinguish me as friend or enemy—no military reason why I should not be shot on sight—no cover where I was at the moment—nothing for it but to walk straight forward, wondering what the next world looks like, if there is one.

And sure enough, about fifty bullets clipped the macadam road on either side of me before McGowan spotted who I was and yelled to me to come and attend to the wounded driver.

Unless you have steady light and instruments, there is not an awful lot that you can do for a man with a revolver bullet in his shoulder, especially in a crowded motor lorry that is bumping over sand and broken masonry. However, I stopped the bleeding. By that time there was no more shooting from the pyramid; they were turning the searchlight in every direction and potting at fugitives. I had time to observe what the cordon of troops was doing.

Searchlights—I would never have believed there were so many in all Egypt. They were advancing ahead of the troops in a wide arc with one end extended toward the pyramid and the other away to the south of us, curving around toward the Nile. They did not, of course, at one time make a perfectly unbroken zone of light in front of them, but there was not an inch of ground that those searchlights did not sweep, and it was impossible to see beyond them except for moments when two lights diverged and one could glimpse between.

One could only imagine the supporting troops converging like ribs of a fan. I wondered what would happen if that tremendous quantity of active electric current should disturb the as yet uncovered cache of Dorje's thunderbolts. What would happen, for instance, to the ammunition in the men's belts?

However, the next hour would decide that. Meanwhile, there was another of our men hit and McGowan himself was half stunned by being pitched off the back of the lorry when we struck a lump of limestone masonry that lay covered with blown sand; so I had my hands full, although McGowan recovered rapidly and very soon took charge again.

They maneuvered until they had the searchlight turned full on the pyramid entrance—that is to say, at a considerable upward angle, and to do it they had to back away about a hundred and fifty yards so as to avoid impenetrable shadow on the few flat feet where there is standing room.

The maneuver made the lorry an almost perfect target. A mere handful of Dorje's men, instead of following the others across the sand and being shot down, had climbed to the higher courses and now kept up a determined, long range fire with their revolvers in the hope of putting the searchlight out of action; they could have escaped then pretty easily toward the Nile, where they would at least have had a slim chance, although there was undoubtedly a whole flotilla of boats on the watch.

They were clever; they never fired twice from the same spot, and it is not easy to aim upward; they had acres of irregularly broken masonry in which to hide, and they only needed one lucky hit to smash the searchlight or put the power plant out of business.

Allison solved it. He suddenly switched the searchlight off, as if it had been smashed, and the din the engine made before they throttled it helped out the illusion. Even above that din we heard one man shout to the others from higher up. I caught the word *homar*—donkey. I told Allison where Bertolini's beast was standing tied to a lump of broken granite; it was a fine, white Muscat mare as capable of speed as any animal of that size can be. And to the imagination of a desperate fugitive, particularly if he happened to be wounded, it probably seemed like lightning on four feet.

I HAD signed the donkey's death warrant, but she never knew what hit her and she had company into the next world if that was consolation. Pausing, directing the searchlight, counting seconds, calcu-

lating how long it would take those men to scramble down the courses, Allison suddenly switched the light on. He gave no order. The machine gun stuttered. Five men and the donkey went away from this world with the suddenness of shadows caught by sunlight—only that these left their shadows in a graceless heap behind them. I heard a sergeant say:

"Lad, y're learning! Ye may buy beer on the strength o' that. I'll drink wi' you!"

Then Jeff, gigantic—he bulks like a barge in darkness—was standing in the entrance, shouting down to us to prevent a hail from the machine gun. The searchlight, swerving upward, caught him and reduced his size as if he had been refocused.

"We've prisoners as soon as you can spare some men!"

Allison went in, and six men after him. They used Li Pu's copper wire to tie the prisoners' hands and hobble their feet. McGowan stayed in charge of the lorry; he spared me one man and I went to see if there were any wounded among the machine gun's victims. I found three, of whom one was almost dead.

The second one we came on—he was lying on the second lowest course of masonry—struck upward at me with a wave edged dagger and had to be held down by the rifleman while I improvised a tourniquet to prevent him from bleeding to death.

The third man fired his last shot as we drew near; it clipped about a third of an inch of skin and hair from the side of my head, but did no other damage. He had a smashed leg—it was almost shot off—but he tried to hide himself among the shadows, and when we did what we could for him he bit the soldier through the hand. It seemed rather obvious that Dorje's discipline included the elimination of the gentler instincts in his followers!

Then Grim came. He took one look at the semicircular cordon of advancing searchlights and spoke to McGowan.

"Signal, if you don't mind."

"O. K. Signal," said McGowan.

Up went the searchlight skyward and described a circle three times, then descended and was switched off. That was twice repeated. There was sudden darkness. Almost exactly together the advancing searchlights were switched off, one only, away to the rear, continuing to send a long pencil of light toward the sky.

It was possible then to see the troops behind the searchlights; companies and squadrons had closed in on one another until they looked like one sickle shaped brush stroke painted rather deeper than the midnight gloom around them. They were grimly mysterious—ominous—almost impossibly silent.

"Shall we go?" said Grim.

McGowan left two men in charge of prisoners and wounded. Jeff climbed into the lorry and demanded antiseptic for the bites in his arm, so my attention was again occupied, but I did not miss much. We jolted forward slowly without running lights, skirting the second and third pyramid and narrowly avoiding open tombs that were hard to distinguish from shadows. Grim turned and whispered to me:

"All this looks like catching a mouse with a herd of elephants, but wait and see."

I asked the obvious question—

"Why not wait for daylight?"

"Too many people much too keyed up," he answered. "By morning they want Cairo properly in hand. If it should leak out that there's a cache of these thunderbolt things in the desert—not yet found and rendered useless—there'd be ructions. At any rate, that's the political view of it. We're lucky there's a red hot general commanding; he doesn't believe a word about the cache, so Mac says, but he's giving us full rope to prove our theory or else eat crow. He's all right. But he'll try to make us eat crow at the showdown. Why not? Who wouldn't? So I think we'll see fireworks."

He so seldom talks like that, particularly in a crisis, that I felt like carrying on.

"You've the goods on Dorje? You can track him down now?" I suggested.

He made no answer. So I asked another one.

"How soon do we start for Chak-sam?"

Jeff overheard and I could almost feel him grinning, as I think Grim did too; however he answered as if he rather liked the prospect:

"Never—unless we're right on this hunt. If there's no cache where we're looking for it, they will remind me I'm a United States American, to whom a visa to visit India can not be granted just at this time for fear of the danger to my health and morals."

WE HAD passed the third pyramid and swung on south by east on bumpy ground. McGowan ordered one flash from the searchlight then, to show our whereabouts, and it was answered by a zigzag movement of the beam of light behind the troops. We began to go slower. Suddenly we stopped. Allison switched on the running lights. McGowan's motorcycle cockney leaped out of a shadow and came running toward us, exposing himself to the light for fear he might be shot unless recognized.

He was out of breath and unable to talk in a low voice; his speech came in gasps, so we all heard what he said, although McGowan jumped to the ground to talk with him.

"Sir, you're close up! There's nigh on fifty of 'em, scared desperate, all 'iding in and around that tomb. Them that couldn't crowd in dug a funk-'ole for 'emselves in the sand what come out o' the tomb. They've killed Mahdi Aububah with the butt end of a rifle, maybe thinking it was 'im who brought the troops down on 'em. They've got lots o' firearms, but I couldn't get near enough to tell what kind."

"Did you overhear anything?"

"Yes, sir, but not much. One man said in Arabic that they'd better die there than be hanged like dogs on a Christian gallows."

"How far away are they?"

" 'Alf a mile. Maybe a bit less. Maybe a bit more. I dunno. I've 'oofed it."

"Where's your motorcycle?"

"Busted. Pitched 'ead first into a open tomb and cut my 'ead; it's all bloody."

So I had one more job of bandaging, but I heard what followed. McGowan, Allison, Grim and Jeff went into conference, as the business bosses say at tea time. They agreed to signal to the general. Up went a beam from the searchlight and McGowan, with Grim agreeing word by word, dictated to Allison, who wrote the message down and then dictated to the sergeant-signaler, who jerked a little gadget and made Morse code flashes on the sky.

CACHE BELIEVED DISCOVERED. REPORTED HELD BY NOT LESS THAN FIFTY RIFLEMEN. DISTANCE ABOUT HALF MILE. MAY WE WAIT FOR DAYLIGHT?

It was nearly five minutes before the answer came, dash-dotted, by the searchlight at the army's rear.

SEND DEMAND FOR UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER, FAILING WHICH WITHIN SIXTY MINUTES ACTION WILL ENSUE WITHOUT FURTHER WARNING.

"Orders are orders," remarked McGowan. "His responsibility! He can't say afterward he wasn't told. The funny thing is, that he doesn't believe in the thunderbolts."

"He never will," Grim answered. "Some men simply can't believe what isn't in the books. However, he's a good sport. We can't grumble. Who goes?"

"You do," said McGowan. "You're more likely than any one else to be able to talk them into unconditional surrender."

"I would like a witness," said Grim.

"Yes of course. All right. Allison, you go with him."

"And the guide would save time. Is he fit for duty?"

"Me, sir? That ain't duty, it's a pleasure! My 'ead's as good as gospel—'tain't broke, only shook up!"

"And a bodyguard," said Grim.

"Make haste then; pick your own."

"Care if I take my own crowd?"

" 'Course not."

So there were four of us, including Jeff and me, who followed that excellent cockney through the darkness with nothing but his sense of direction to guide us. He was as keen as a terrier hunting rats. He was one of those men whose passion it is to pull out chestnuts from the fire for other people, well contented if only his beneficiaries make the utmost use of what he finds. A priceless man.

A handkerchief was too small, so we fastened a shirt to a stick and took two flashlights to illuminate it. Grim took that flag and divided us.

"No use all getting shot."

Twenty paces to his right went Allison, Jeff twenty paces to his left. I followed, twenty paces to the rear. And the cockney led, like the fellow who carries the drag for a crack pack—that is to say not thoughtful for our comfort. He took an almost straight line, and the going was so evil that we took a full eleven minutes to negotiate that scant half mile.

WE ARRIVED breathless in the bottom of a hollow like the trough of a wave, caused by wind having whipped out the sand; and for a minute we all lay there, breathing deep. Then Grim moved, and the cockney said:

"Straight up ahead of you, sir. Not an 'undred yards now."

So we climbed to the top of the sand wave, where Allison and Jeff switched on the flashlights and Grim stood bathed in light with the white flag waving slowly as high over his head as he could hold it. I counted ninety seconds before at least a dozen heads showed fifty yards away and a harsh voice shouted—

"What is that?"

"Forty-five!" Grim answered calmly.

The entire conversation took place in Egyptian-Arabic, and there was not a great deal of it.

"Sixty thousand dogs!" came back the answer. "That is the true word, but who told it to you—and who are you?"

"Have you heard of Jimgrim?"

It was a reasonable question. He is so well known by that name from end to end of the Near East that it was hardly likely that at least one of them would not know him by reputation.

"Curses on his religion! What does *he* want?"

"I am Jimgrim. I have come to advise you to surrender."

"What is offered?"

"Nothing. Dorje's cause is lost. Unless you surrender unconditionally, and at once, you will be wiped out."

There was a long pause, probably for consultation, but we could not hear voices. Grim's voice broke the silence.

"I make no promise except that if you surrender, I will do what I can for you. Probably only those who have committed murder will be hanged. I advise those of you who have killed no one to compel the others. I will count one hundred, slowly. *Wahid—itnein—talateh—*"

The answer was a savage howl of laughter and three rifle shots. Out went the flashlights and we all ducked below the sand hill, except young Allison, who rolled over and over. I had to grope for him in total darkness. A hail of bullets swept over our heads and I estimated there to be more like a hundred than fifty rifles. Then there was sudden silence and a voice yelled:

"Curses on your religion, Jimgrim! If you are afraid to see ten thousand dead men, take away your army!"

Then another storm of bullets swept above us. Allison was hard hit. Jeff carried him, and as we crawled away over the rim of the hollow I saw the army's searchlights all come blazing into action.

There was a roar from the distant motors as the cordon closed in on the cache, at high speed, flooding the sand in

front of them with flowing light. Ahead of us we could see McGowan's searchlight racing forward, tossing its rays as the lorry wheels bucked over ridges of sand. We hurried. There was no guessing what would happen, or what surprise those fanatics had in store; our cue was to beat it as fast as we could. Something not remotely unlike panic lent us wings, and if Jeff had not had to carry Allison and we had not waited for Jeff, we would probably have lowered the world's sand track record for a quarter of a mile.

Finally Jeff's wind gave out. We lay down and I tried in the dark to feel where Allison was hit. He died as I laid my hands on him—as decent a young officer as ever stopped a blackguard's bullet. Then the thing happened that has been so variously described, since it was seen by many thousand men and no two witnesses ever see or remember anything exactly as it happened. My account is very likely no more accurate than scores of others. I can say what I saw, that is all.

THE CORDON of searchlights closed in rapidly, in an almost perfect segment of an arc. McGowan's lorry bumped and thundered past us. And then suddenly I felt something that I can't describe. It suggested static, although I don't know how or why it did, and it made one's skin tingle and one's teeth and ears ache.

All sound ceased instantly—or seemed to—as every searchlight fused and went out at the same moment and every truck came to a standstill. It was almost as if the universe had gone dead. A plane that I had not even noticed circling in the night, crashed within three hundred feet of where I lay. As nearly as I remember, at about the instant when that happened and when six or seven other planes were falling in all directions, there began a white-hot glow at the place where the cache was supposed to be hidden.

It was next thing to impossible to watch it, it increased so rapidly and its glare grew so prodigious. For a moment, but only a moment, it showed the hues of decomposing metals. And it only lasted about a minute, perhaps less.

I believe I saw human figures fleeing from it, caught in its heat and instantly cremated; but they were gone like swift shadows, and that may have been imagination. I can only say that when I think of it, and close my eyes, there is a very vivid mental picture of human figures leaping in the white-hot glare of hell.

For a minute or two, when the glare died, we were all blind. It was as if we had stared too long at lightning. I was almost deaf, too; I could not make sense of Grim's remarks to Jeff, although he was close beside me. Jeff picked up Allison, not knowing he was dead, and carried him toward McGowan's lorry. Our flashlight was out of action; Allison, of course, had dropped his, and the one Grim took from Jeff was so hot that it burned him and he had to throw it away.

Dazed, I followed Jeff, who groped his way toward McGowan. Grim was on ahead of us. The first words I distinguished clearly as the vague paralysis left the region of my eardrums, were McGowan's—

"Maybe he'll believe us next time!"

"No," said Grim, "he'll say it was a meteor or an earthquake."

McGowan laughed.

"Perhaps he'll say we planted it to make ourselves a reputation! Anyhow, the old boy broke a record as well as his planes and dynamos. I'll bet you that's the first time an army left its ammunition on the desert and advanced behind a screen of unprotected trucks. Say that for him! . . . Who's that? Who's gone West? Allison? Oh, damn! I'd rather have lost—"

He did not say whom he would rather have lost, but his next phrase was a bit suggestive, "Grim I'd trade you, any six brass hats on earth for Allison. That boy had brains and guts too."

"Allison won't kick. He died up front," Grim answered. "It's only being caught off-stage that actually hurts."

CHAPTER XXI

"What has our babu done to them I wonder?"

NUMBERS of extremely competent men are so peculiarly credulous that in the face of facts they will believe anything whatever except the true explanation. That general was a case in point. I never met him, never even saw him. Grim did, and privately, afterward, he and McGowan laughed with Jeff, Chullunder Ghose and me about the conversation they had with him under the stars while the army engineers waited for a hole in the ground to grow cool enough to be examined.

He did not believe in the existence of Dorje, or his thunderbolts; but he played fair and gave us every opportunity, his only mistake having been that he risked quite a number of airplanes and lost them along with their crews. Not one member of the air force employed that night survived to talk about it. Every electric device withing a mile and a half of Dorje's cache not only fused, but was made irreparably useless.

Even motor vehicles whose engines were not running at the moment were put out of commission by the exhaustion of their batteries, which occurred with such sudden violence that the batteries were wrecked. The only reason why the army was not wiped out was that every round of ammunition had been left under guard on the desert five miles away.

There was not a trace of the thunderbolts after they went off, so we could prove nothing. Their desperate custodians had, in all probability, turned the plugs on dozens, perhaps hundreds of them, in the hope of escaping just before the critical moment and them watching the army blown to smithereens by the explosion of the amumnition in the men's belts. But they miscalculated. They were probably ignorant men, incapable of estimating how much electricity so many searchlights would develop or at what range it would become effective. Anyhow, they were caught; and the immeasurable heat—as intense, perhaps, as that developed by a meteor in contact with the atmosphere—that entirely consumed the brass tubes, did more than cremate those men within its radius. It dissolved them into gas—bones and all. There was not a trace of them discovered.

So there was no one to be questioned after the event, and there was no telltale evidence except a hot hole in the ground that looked volcanic and that might have been caused by a meteor or by a terrific bolt of lightning. There had been a tomb there, but now there was none. Stones weighing tons had vanished. Something new in thermo-dynamics had been invented. Some one had discovered how nature converts vibration into heat and dissipates the concentrated heat into another vibration that has other characteristics and effects.

But the general declared it was the communists and that a cache of some kind of explosive smuggled in by agents of Moscow for the use of Egyptian malcontents had gone off. He accounted for the absence of noise by suggesting that the shape of the tomb might have had the effect of a silencer. The effect on batteries and magnetos he ascribed to shock. And you know what the newspapers said. They had their information from official sources.

"It's probably some new sort of explosive," the general admitted. "Or they may have rediscovered Greek fire. No one knows what that was; no one knows what its explosion would have done to electrical instruments because there were none in those days."

And because no traces of them could be found he denied that all the guardians of the cache could have been killed. He was sure that most of them escaped, so all the troops were promptly put to work to find them, with the result that scores and scores of said-to-be suspicious characters were rounded up and thrown in prison, where, being wholly innocent, they accused one another and gave birth to

fabulous stories about communist activities. Some of those tales are still going the rounds.

But he was a courteous man and though he considered Grim a visionary and Dorje a mare's nest he paid no attention to suggestions from some members of his staff that we were interlopers who should be restrained from further mischief.

On the contrary, he thanked Grim for his "opportune assistance" and provided us with camels, since there was not a car or even a motorcycle whose ignition was not completely ruined. He sent an Egyptian orderly along with us, too, to take charge of the camels and return them.

It was almost daybreak when we entered the city and were challenged by a sergeant in charge of a guard at a street corner. We had been given no password, and McGowan had stayed with the general; moreover, the sergeant was bored and wanted news, so he accused us of stealing army camels, which our orderly thought was a fine joke, so the orderly said nothing. Bruised, tired, sleepy and craving a bath before anything else, we were not in a mood to solve problems by the exercise of humor, or even to realize that this wasn't a problem and that the sergeant was only joking with us. However, Grim amused him with a yarn about the searchlights having quit because the army swore too badly about working overtime; and Jeff borrowed a cigaret from him, which is always an excellent way to open negotiations.

"Our Indian friend has mine," said Jeff, and the sergeant stared at us again by the light of a kerosene lantern.

"Was you gentlemen the friends of Maharah Gautama Sri Krishna Hanuman Asoka Sahib of Bengal? I think that was the name."

"We are his worshipful admirers," Grim answered. "What has happened to him?"

"Sir, he has the maharanee with him, and they had blind Bertolini, the archæologist, in the car. Is one of you gentlemen Major Grim by any chance? Well, he left word that his chauffeur would pick you up at Brown's Hotel; and he said it would be all right for you all to come to breakfast without shaving."

"Had he the password?"

"No, sir. But he was riding in a service car and it was Colonel McGowan's chauffeur, so I let him pass without argument. My orders are not to interfere with any one who can give a decent account of himself. That one was a prince all right. I wish there was a few more like him. Affable? He told me any time I go to India he'll get me transferred to his own corps of lancers—says the pay's about double what *we* get and the chances of promotion A-1. Took my name, too—had the maharanee write it for him on an envelop."

We rode on, bidding baths goodby. The only conceivable meaning of "breakfast without shaving" was that Chullunder Ghose needed us in a hurry. McGowan's car was waiting near the hotel; as soon as the camels were out of sight we piled in; and before we had slammed the car door we were off, the chauffeur treating us to an exhibition of fancy driving that was too impetuous to be based on mere desire to get his night's work done and go to breakfast. We fairly flew, toward the region of Nile-bank villas, where the better class of houses stand in walled gardens.

There was no name on the gate of the house where we drew up—nothing to distinguish it from a score of others that had gardens sloping to the Nile, except that the shrubbery topping the wall was a bit more dense and the house was invisible through the bars of the iron gate because of a turn in the drive which curved around some sort of outhouse, screened by a clump of bamboo.

For a blind man's house the grounds looked too well kept. There was an atmosphere of wealth and good taste. Yet we knew it was Bertolini's house because his donkey's hoofprints were deep in the dust outside the gate, and there are not many people living in that kind of house,

even in Egypt, whose donkeys use the front entrance.

The gate opened mysteriously, pulled by some one unseen, and the chauffeur drove in without ceremony, down a drive along which, on either hand, Egyptian statuary alternated with well kept palms. Dawn was breaking; the place looked clean and peaceful in the early light, and there was a pond in which a group of flamingoes preened themselves with an air of never having been neglected or disturbed since Noah left the Ark.

It was a big white stucco house. All the blinds were drawn, and behind two of them, on the ground floor, there was candlelight. The front door opened as we drew up under the portico, and a Chinese dressed in black silk stood bowing to us, shaking himself by the hand.

"Here," said Grim, "is where we watch our step, if we propose to go to Chaksam!" He spoke low, hardly moving his lips, so that the chauffeur should not hear him. "Remember now, no shooting! We're ditched if we do. If they're clever they'll tempt us to shoot. Do you see the point?"

Jeff did instantly, but I don't reason quite so swiftly around daybreak after a night out. Grim explained:

"Bertolini knows there's something wrong; and he's crafty, or he wouldn't be Dorje's agent. He has the usual blind man's confidence that nobody will harm him, so he doesn't fear for his own skin. He'll argue that if we're friends he'd better make us prove it; if we're enemies we'll shoot on provocation. Then we can be charged with murder or attempted murder—no bail—and he'll have time to cover up before we can prove anything.

"It wouldn't surprise me to discover he's been warned by some Egyptian official that we're on Dorje's trail; if so, he'll know we have no warrants—no authority. If he thinks there's half a chance we're 'us' he'll play the old game—get us foul of our own net."

The Chinese in the doorway seemed a bit disturbed about our lack of haste. He came forward and opened the car door, smiling blandly but looking displeased when Grim ordered the chauffeur back to the hotel to wait for McGowan. However, the chauffeur was gone before the Chinese could protest.

"We're filthy," said Grim. "Can we clean up?" And instead of hurrying, he grew deliberate. He paused in the hall to admire Egyptian antiquities, with which the house was as full as a museum; he lingered to examine scarabs in a glass case. "May I have a candle? Light's too dim. I can't see."

"No, no, not now," said the Oriental.

"Why not?"

"Lavatoly this way."

He led and we followed, but we took a long time in there, washing blood off our faces and tidying up. The Chinese stood watching us as obviously irritated as a disturbed owl and as silent and outwardly still. We had to ask him for towels. Grim took off his turban, examined it and decided to rebind it with the outside in. He asked the Chinese to help him.

"That take too much time. You use hair brush."

But apparently Grim had no sense of time. He bound the turban on as carefully as a woman getting ready for a fancy dress ball.

"Baltis here?" he asked.

No answer. Grim repeated the question.

"You come soon. You see."

"You're garrulous!" said Grim. "If you want me to hurry, come and help me with this."

So the Chinese stood behind him to put a hand on the folds at the back and to guide the silk as layer carefully was added above layer. Jeff, done spluttering in the basin, rubbing his stubble-black face with a towel, watched the mirror—noticed Grim's expression—saw the movement of his eyelids. So did I, but I did not know just what it meant.

Jeff, on the way to his jacket that hung on a hook on the door, had to pass behind the Chinese. He turned suddenly. His left hand clapped the towel over the

Chinese's mouth; his right arm, descending, crushed the yellow man's arms to his sides and pinned him helpless.

"I'd a hunch to wear this thing," said Grim and, removing the turban, he used it.

It was vastly better than a rope. I helped him, and between us we bandaged the towel in place besides trussing the Chinese's arms and legs until he was as helpless as a mummy—almost. He could still breathe. We could still investigate his pockets, of which he had several in the lining of his loose black jacket. Jeff pulled out a pad made of medical cotton and gauze, well folded in a linen handkerchief. I found a sealed glass flask containing about a pint of some colorless liquid. It might be chloroform. There was no cork; it had been sealed by melting the neck of the flask in a Bunsen burner, and the only way to get the stuff out was to break the bottle neck.

"Don't open it," said Grim. "It's possibly as new and deadly as the thunderbolts."

He went on searching. Tucked in the waistband of the black silk trousers he found a Yale key; it was wrapped in a scrap of paper and inclosed in a small leather purse that fastened with a snap.

"Master key." The letter M was stamped on the metal. "Look at that, will you?"

He held the scrap of paper toward the candle in a sconce near the mirror. Scrawled on it in heavy pencil were the words "Sweet A." Stooping again to continue his search he kept up a running comment while his fingers felt the seams.

"Sweet Adeline is rather far from home. He may be totally indifferent to her, but weak at spelling. Suite A is the number of Baltis's apartment at the hotel. Oh, hello—here's something."

He stood up again to examine his find in the candlelight. It was a token made of gold, no larger than a dime and beautifully done by hand, not stamped or cast from a mold. In high relief on one side was a Tibetan *dorje*—the short lamaic scepter with a crown at each end. On the reverse was a pyramid composed of forty-five stars.

"Stowed in the seam of his pants' leg. This man probably is Bertolini's immediate boss, disguised as a sort of confidential butler; else why the gold token and why the air of authority? If he had been obeying orders he would never have let us keep him waiting all that time. And whoever gave him the orders would have come to see why the delay? But you can't make a Chinese talk—not his sort; so let's leave him."

Grim pocketed the token and blew out the light. Jeff locked the lavatory door and pocketed the key; then he opened the door of a room in which we had seen candlelight at the edge of the window blinds. The candles were still burning; there were fresh cigar butts—nine of them—on ash trays spaced around a table made from slabs of cypress looted from ancient tombs. There were nine chairs of the same material. The other furniture was all museum stuff and no doubt priceless, if you like that kind of thing. I would as soon live in a pawn shop. There was a mummy, upended, naked, with a sheet of plate glass covering its coffin, at the far end of the room.

Grim merely looked in, counting the cigar butts.

"Ten then, unless Bertolini smokes. Not many blind men do. Two others kept a lookout—see those chairs displaced beside the window—twelve then. What has our *babu* done to them, I wonder."

Grim and Jeff both think like that about Chullunder Ghose. It had occurred to me that twelve men might have had the better of him, but experience, I suppose, builds confidence. I hoped, at any rate, that they would not trust me to that extent; I would prefer to have them worry and make all haste to the rescue.

Grim's movements were almost leisurely, although he made practically no sound as he walked, so he may have been listening. Jeff pulled up the blinds and we left the door of that room open for the sake of the light that it admitted to the hall. Then Grim led quietly along a

passage to the right and suddenly stood still.

There were three doors at the end of the passage, one at each side and one facing us. They all had Yale locks, of the sort that snap shut when you close the door and that can be opened from the outside only with the key, unless the latch is held back by a sliding button that manipulates a pin. As silently as possible Grim tested one door, then another —the one facing us; it was unlocked; it opened into a small square waiting room, in which there was an electric bell and a numbered indicator. We surveyed the room.

Facing the door was a cushioned bench. Above that was a shelf containing Chinese books in paper bindings. On the right hand were a plain chair and an equally plain wooden table. On the left hand was a papered wall, entirely bare except for a gilt framed reproduction, three by two, of Botticelli's "Graces." The frame was heavy and securely fastened to the wall with screws at top and bottom.

There was a lighted candle on the table. Grim took it and examined the picture. He tinkered with it; tried to push it sidewise, downward, upward—but nothing happened. He clapped his ear to it—listened and seemed encouraged—tried again, feeling the wall with the palms of his hands.

Then suddenly he handed Jeff the candlestick and whispered:

"Have you matches? Blow that out then if you see this even looks like moving."

I shut the door. It was as stuffy in there as a bear's den and there were smells such as only a Chinese knows how to brew—there was no window and no ventilator.

Grim resumed his efforts, until at last his fingers found a small lump on the edge of the frame farthest from the door. He pressed it, and found that the picture and glass moved inward on a hinge. Then Jeff motioned us to draw near and blew out the light.

CHAPTER XXII

"Give 'em a couple more—damn such devils!"

THERE was a square mouthed shaft behind the picture, leading downward at an angle of about forty-five degrees and growing wider as it descended, so that at the bottom it was about a foot high and several feet wide. Its upper half was made of steel that had been inserted rather recently; it had rusted, but not much. The lower half was a slot hewn in solid rock that opened into what appeared to be a tomb of about the period of the early Roman occupation. It was well lighted by tall, thick candles and by a number of nightlights screened with colored glass, so that the effect was rather nice.

The chamber into which we looked was oblong, hewn from a most faultless limestone. In the midst there was a round hole, through which the top of a ladder protruded. On each of the three sides that we could see there were three oblong niches hewn into the rock, and those had obviously once held human bodies. They were now used as shelves and were arrayed with dozens of human skulls, between which were the colored nightlights. Beneath those niches and running unbroken around three sides of the chamber was a stone ledge, now used for a seat by a dozen men; the tall, fat candles stood in metal sconces spiked into the ledge between them, so that each man had a candle on either side of him.

They were of various nationalities, and they had various weapons. I could see the butts of three revolvers. One man had a sawed-off shotgun in a violin case which he had laid opened at his feet. Most of them had knives in evidence, but one man—an Italian apparently, with possibly a trace of color in his veins—was slapping the palm of his hand with a whalebone blackjack nearly eighteen inches long.

Another man had spiked brass knuckles on his right fist. And there was one man,

evidently French, who wore a beard and whose forearms were protected by spiked gauntlets; I could see the spikes protruding where they had pierced his shirt sleeves.

They were talking, in low tones, in several languages; I detected Arabic, French, Italian, and there may have been others, but it was impossible to catch more than a word or two because all three of us were peering down the shaft, a bit in one another's way, and the words came mixed up with a rumbling echo that resembled the talking of water underground. One of the men came and climbed on something that we could not see; he peered up the shaft, and Grim let the picture fall back into place. We waited in dead silence for several minutes, but nothing happened, and hardly a sound reached us through the closed aperture.

When Grim opened it again they had a black man in there, gagged and with his hands tied. He was dressed in filthy cotton clothing, but they had torn most of it off him, and he was badly wounded; he had been beaten about the head and blood was oozing from several cuts on his body. They were showing him knives and enjoying the terror betrayed by the whites of his eyes, but there was no longer any conversation and no laughter. Suddenly the voice of some one whom we could not see came clearly up the shaft—not loud but clear cut, speaking Arabic.

"You know the rule. He talked, and that's treason. So that you'll know what to expect if you do any talking yourselves, each of you has to hurt him and the last one kills him. I come last. You're first, Pantopoulos."

A man who looked as much Armenian as Greek—he had a bulbous, hooked nose—stood up and began to heat wire in the flame of a candle. Grim let the picture fall in place again. I felt him reaching for my pocket.

"Matches, Jeff."

Jeff lighted the candle. Grim examined the flask of liquid I had taken from the Chinese.

"It might be anything. Even if it's only chloroform it might scare 'em. Quick—what's in that table drawer?"

It was locked. Jeff set a knee on the table, clenched his teeth until the muscles stood in knots along his jaws, jerked twice and tore off half the top. The drawer was full of flasks exactly similar to the one in Grim's hand, except that some of these were larger.

"Take a chance, then! Lights out!"

But the catch that held the picture in its place had jammed. Grim tried to force it, but the picture had been pasted on an iron lid that was hung on iron hinges. Nothing moved, until Jeff, with a handkerchief over his knuckles, punched the thing and burst it inward.

I had one glimpse of the gagged man writhing to the torture of a red hot wire. Grim threw the first flask, Jeff the second. I threw a quart one. All three smashed within a foot of one another on the stone floor, scarcely a yard from the round hole in the center. I saw the tortured, gagged man stagger and pitch headfirst down the hole; and I think that the man with the hot wire followed him—headfirst also; it was difficult to be sure of that, because the moment the glass flasks splintered their contents changed into a dense white vapor that almost instantly filled the entire chamber to a height of nine or ten feet.

There was no noticeable smell. It was woolly, lazy, heavy looking stuff. Its upper surface resembled a cloud such as one looks down on from a mountain top. And it did not put out the lights; they shone through it, as I have seen them shine through loosely packed snow. There was a rather ghastly silence.

Jeff struck a match and held it in the opening. There was a slight down draught—merely enough to make the match flame flicker.

"Give 'em a couple more," he suggested. "Damn such devils!"

He and I did. Grim stuffed cushions down the opening after that and closed the lid, but it refused to shut tight; Jeff had bent the iron and the pin was broken.

"Hope we haven't killed our *babu*," I suggested. "Seems to me, that stuff creeps; and if he's underground it may get to him through doors—tunnels—"

"Let's go," said Grim. "Suppose we each take one of those things. Never know your luck. May need 'em."

So we each put a flask in an inside pocket, hoping that the glass was not so fragile as it looked. We left the door of that room open, to encourage the down draught as a slight but possibly important reenforcement to the cushions and the bent lid.

Grim immediately produced the pass key we had taken from the Chinese. He opened the door on our right; it was a closet filled with old books, magazines and odds and ends. Then he opened the door that faced it across the passage; and for the purpose of swift retreat I fastened back the springbolt, so that the door, which was a tight fit, closed but did not lock behind us.

TO BE CONTINUED

BLACK OAK

By

EDGAR YOUNG

TRAMPS and tugs and passenger vessels were tooting lustily in Rio de Janeiro Bay. The big, new navy had returned from the world cruise. In the city of Rio that hugged the circular bay, flags had leaped to the tops of masts and were flapping in the trade wind.

João Candido, the big negro admiral, stood for a moment on the bridge of the *Minas Geraes* staring about over the bay. His teeth showed in a broad grin. Now and again his glance swept along the base of the sea wall and toward the ferry slips. No launches or flag bedecked barges were putting out. He walked to the ladder and climbed down to the upper deck and entered his cabin.

Tossing his cap upon a table, he stepped to a locker and took out his green cocked hat and put it on. Shutting the locker door, he looked at himself for a time in the mirror that formed the upper half of the door. He bowed his head up and down and watched the bobbing plume dip back and forth. He thrust his face closer. He looked into his eyes and smiled at himself good humoredly. He drew his heavy lips back and scanned his white teeth that gleamed in even rows.

Apparently satisfied, he examined the set of his uniform collar, the gilt work on his chest and, hunching first one huge shoulder and then the other, he gazed at the reflection of the big epaulets that perched upon them.

Starting to turn, he noted the gleam of oil on his dark visage. He scowled blackly, reached for his handkerchief and rubbed briskly. Turning about, he walked over to the wash bowl, took a bottle of perfume from the shelf above it and dabbed the wet cork a few times on arms and chest. He squinted down the crease of his trousers to the shine of his yellow shoes, cleared his throat, threw back his shoulders, opened the door and stepped out again upon the deck.

He stalked to the rail beside the mulatto commander who stood moodily staring toward the city.

"Any sign of the delegation I ordered to meet us?" he blurted in throaty Portuguese.

"*Não, mi Admiral.*"

"*Diabo!* That's strange. The wireless I sent the president was plain. I told him what to do and who to invite with him. Perhaps the fool has not had brains to arrange it."

The mulatto shrugged.

"Perhaps he has not wanted to, senhor."

"You think not?"

"*Quem sabe?* In other countries kings and rulers are glad to welcome their

naval officers. Have we not seen it in those lands?"

The mulatto lifted his shoulders, thrust his hands out palm upward and gave a most expressive shrug.

Admiral Candido snorted. He turned and began pacing up and down, whirling his head to look now and again toward the city.

Thoughts piled into his brain. This very thing was a sample. Foreign officers and their families, even common sailors, had snubbed them in the ports of the world where they had called on the cruise. He snarled to himself as he thought about it.

"Other countries know that here in Brazil naval officers lack social prestige. That is why they slighted us. That is why I sent instructions to the president."

His voice boomed with rage.

It did not occur to him that color might have had something to do with it in other lands. The tar brush had fallen full upon the admiral. Other of his officers were more than touched with it. Brazil absolutely draws no line. White men and ladies, black men and their families, yellow men—they mix and mingle without thought of color. But naval officers had not been accepted in the higher tier of polyglot society as yet. The big navy was a new thing.

The admiral stopped pacing. He stared about the dreadnought. Petty officers and sailors had swarmed to the rails, muttering and shaking clenched fists across at the city. Word of a great official welcome had seeped through the entire navy. Now it was not forthcoming.

The big hand of the admiral clapped heavily on the shoulder of the mulatto commander of the flagship.

"Ask the wireless operator to find out if the delegation is on the way to the wharf."

In a moment a spark began to hiss and hum high above. It paused a moment, then sputtered again and stopped. The mulatto hurried out with the news.

"No committee will be sent," he stated.

"*Que diabo!* The president— that big goat with horns on dares to insult us!"

He stormed up and down. His huge body bent and unbent as he shook his fists and gesticulated. His feet stamped the deck as he whirled here and there. Springing to the rail, he shook his clenched fist toward the palace, the top of which could be seen across the lower city and at the base of a gray cliff.

"Big goat with horns on, I'll show you something! Egg of mud, I am a man! And my navy deserves respect!"

ADMIRAL CANDIDO'S big voice began to hurl orders. Officers and sailors alike raced from the rails where they had clustered. Gun crews stripped their shirts and rolled their trousers to their knees. Signal flags raced to the mastheads spelling out orders to the other ships of the fleet. The wireless was spitting angrily. Eighteen-inch and fourteen-inch and twelve-inch guns wavered as they were trained over the house tops toward the palace.

The wireless spat the signal—

"Fire!"

A most awful thud. The noise of ten thousand thunders rent the tropic air. The whole fleet had fired a broadside.

In Rio de Janeiro a million people stampeded as they scrambled to their feet. Out of stores, out of banks, out of offices, out of churches, palaces and hovels came shouting men and screaming women and bawling children.

"The fleet—the fleet! The new navy is bombarding the palace!"

There are but two outlets to the mountain walled city by land. One is down the Avenida and through the big tunnel and along the beach to the south. The other is along the railroad track toward São Paulo.

Half a million followed one route, half a million followed the other. Carts, autos, horses and dogs were swept along with the throngs. Hurry! The great affair was to move—at top speed.

Another broadside, and the city rocked anew. Masses of running humanity were

hurled flat and shaken like rats, as the flock of shells exploded against the mountains. Horses reared; bulls and oxen bellowed. Amid the jam eight mules leaped and surged forward with the presidential coach.

Another broadside roared and screamed and blasted against the mountainsides. The top of the palace was sheared off. The iron tanks on the knoll beside the palace were riddled with holes. The hovels behind the palace at the base of the cliffs were blown away like chaff.

Suddenly the bombardment ceased. Barefooted, grimy sailors swarmed to the rails of the fifty warships and shouted taunts at the deserted city.

On the flagship, *Minas Geraes*, Admiral João Candido bellowed an order. The big dreadnought swung slowly about and headed toward the sea. Her sister ship, the *São Paulo*, plowed behind her. One by one the other ships of the fleet fell into line. Out through the narrow gap they had entered a few hours before steamed the Brazilian navy. The garrisons of the two forts beside the entrance were on the walls and cheering them wildly. The forts had joined the revolt.

Out upon the horizon the fifty vessels lay to, rolling upon the South Atlantic swell.

The inhabitants made all haste to return. The remembrance of open doors and unlocked safes set legs to running and chests to heaving.

Night settled down upon a shocked and stupefied city, a city trying to carry on by lamp and candlelight, for the wires were down.

Morning dawned and the sun crept upward. The fleet came steaming in again.

"Grub! Send out barges of dried fish, hog meat, beef! Send out casks of wine! Send *farinha de pão!* And each merchant come with his barge load and stay to sample it! We want no poisoned stuff!"

Rich men worked with peons loading barges and lighters. Wrinkled aristocrats with gold teeth in their mouths worked with stocky stevedores, carrying bundles and bales and casks. Better this than the loss of all they had. In an hour the freight was at the squat sides of the navy ships and the slings were taking the stuff aboard.

Admiral João Candido leaned over the rail and watched. His huge black hands gripped the rail as he peered here and there. When the empty boats were being rowed clumsily away he gave a throaty laugh, but no one made reply to his jeering mirth. He had the drop on them, with a navy rated just behind Japan's.

DAYS passed and became weeks. Candido's fleet returned at intervals for more grub and steamed away again. News came from Pará and Pernambuco that they had been levied upon. Down south, Santos and Paranagua had furnished coffee and live beef cattle. It was a navy gone amok. The entire world awaited the next move. But Candido stuck to his own coast and preyed upon Brazil only.

He grew bolder and more brazen with power as the months went by. He sent wireless messages to the ports, stating exactly when he would arrive and precisely what he wished done when he got there.

The trade of the ports fell to almost nothing. Foreign ships, with changed destinations, went on down and through the Straits and up the West Coast to Chili and Peru.

It looked as if João Candido could keep it up indefinitely.

But a scheme was working. Four hundred foreign adventurers had been secretly recruited. In a tiny room in a dilapidated old mansion they met the president in pairs and small groups and accepted his terms. They were to receive commissions and an incidental salary of four hundred gold dollars a month. They were Americans, Englishmen, Australians, Canadians, Frenchmen and Germans. There was one Egyptian. They were officers of a dry land navy. Loyal peons were brought in from interior towns for

them to train. Many of them knew little about naval matters, but they kept their tongues between their teeth.

One night swarms of men crept down the shores of the bay toward the forts on either side of the channel. Flatboats and barges were poled in the same direction in the shallow water along the shore. Four hundred adventurers and a thousand peons swarmed over the walls and fell upon the garrisons. The struggle was brief, and the prisoners were herded into cells under the cliffs. Silence became the watchword as they awaited the arrival of the fleet. Candido had wirelessed that he would arrive at Rio that night.

It was shortly after ten o'clock when they saw red and green lights flickering out at sea. Soon they heard the muffled coughing of the exhausts. As the fleet approached nearer, the searchlights of the *Minas Geraes* blazed on and the big beam played upon the two forts. The fleet came creeping in.

And then—bedlam. Boats and lighters reached the line of ships from both sides. Shouting men boarded the vessels like old-time pirates with drawn sabers and pistols. The ships drifted on up the bay in front of the promenade along the sea wall.

Rio de Janeiro saw the thing being acted as upon a stage. The heavy fighting was on the decks of the *Minas Geraes*, which now blazed with electric lights. The promenaders, thronging to the balustrade of the sea wall, saw a hundred hand to hand fights. They heard oaths and shouts in foreign tongues. They saw the gigantic black leap down from the bridge and lay about with his shiny sword. In a moment they saw him fall sprawling with a cutlass through his chest. For a few minutes the popping of pistols and the clashing of blades continued. But when the report had passed around, surrender came at once.

They were herded over the sides into lighters and ferried ashore. By midnight they were all locked up in the local jails. A few weeks later they were sent up the Amazon to work as slaves on the rubber plantations. The foreign officers of the new navy resigned when natives had been trained.

THE BRIGHTEST BOLO

A Story of the Philippines

By CHARLES L. CLIFFORD

THE BODY of Mariano Malvar, late private, Sixtieth Company, Philippine Scouts, was found by the dawn relief of the guard. It was not the first hacked remnant of a good soldier to be found on Post No. 5. The Post of Death, the men called it now. It was a gloomy trail by the river near the native *barrio*, and the thick bamboo and mangroves made it easy of approach to the lurking Moro after a Service rifle.

A board of inquiry was called to determine the cause of death. A perfunctory matter, required of the commanding officer by Army Regulations. The mere fact that the Scout had been done to death with a blade, and that his rifle and belt were not to be found, told the tale to all who had been in Mindanao as long as the Scout troops in Balang.

Cardine was called before the board. He had been officer of the day, and on his rounds after midnight had joined the relief and himself stumbled over the clay that had been Mariano. The sentries on adjoining posts had heard nothing.

The board examined the body and prodded aimlessly about in the thick brush near where it had been discovered. Then they adjourned to the cool club porch and had a forenoon bottle of beer.

"Got out of drill, anyway," the recorder said amiably, and he swallowed half a bottle without reference to his glass.

"No doubt about it being a *barong*, is there, Medico?" the old Scout captain, who was president of the board, asked idly. "I've seen a lot of them and that's what it looked like to me."

"None," the doctor said. "Damned near severed the head."

The captain nodded at the lieutenant.

"Write it up. Hostile Moro—line of duty—death not due to his own misconduct. The usual thing . . . And for heaven's sake don't bust up my siesta. Bring it around to be signed after dinner."

"That goes for me, too, Teniente," the medico said; and he gurgled an entire glass of beer down his red throat at a swallow.

Cardine sat in his orderly room after drill and stared somberly through the screened window by his desk. The dry parade ground shook under the heat. His routine papers had been signed. It was almost time for officers' call. Still he sat and puffed at his pipe, turning over moodily in his mind the events of the night before. Old Cabanatan, the first sergeant, watched him. The slant eyed company clerk, Corporal Annuncion, rustled papers busily at his own desk. He too watched Cardine, sidelong out of his sly eyes.

Cabanatan coughed, trying to catch his captain's eye.

"Captain," he said timidly, "those you would punish are outside."

Cardine shook himself out of his revery. He scowled ferociously at the sergeant as though blaming him for the derelictions of all breakers of regulations.

"They will get the hell, all right," the old soldier thought to himself, and he shouted through the door that led to the barracks. Two solemn faced little brown men entered, privates both, and saluted their captain as though both their right hands were actuated by the same spring.

"Privates Lucas Gruspe and Cesario Lopez, Captain," announced Cabanatan severely.

Cardine fixed the guilty pair with a withering glance. Like a sudden thunder storm he assailed them with a torrent of sturdy oaths. The two little soldiers, immovable of face and body, watched him with unblinking eyes. El Cardine always was thus. It did not hurt one. But what came after did.

Red faced, Cardine said:

"So you think you can sleep out of barracks? Damn your black souls, what would a woman want of either of you? Where were you at check last night?"

Since this was hurled at them in their native Illocano, they squirmed with the knowledge that they could not say they did not understand—a favorite defense of the little brown soldier when in a jam like this.

Lucas Gruspe, as befitted the man of most service, spoke up.

"*Señor Capitan*—our sins are different; we were apart . . ."

Cardine cursed.

"For myself, I visit the uncle of my father, who is the first sergeant of the Company No. 59. They have at this house the little *fiesta* because of the birth of a son. The *jota* it is danced—"

"And the *vino* it is poured," Cardine growled in English. "Ten days grass cutting, Sergeant!" And to Gruspe, "Beat it, you!"

He glared up at Cesario Lopez.

"What's your song and dance?"

The soldier's face became sullen. He dropped his eyes to the floor and did not answer. The clerk Annuncion, with a great show of importance and a shadowy smile of malice directed at Lopez, rose from his desk and read to the captain a memorandum on a yellow scratch pad he held in his hand.

"Already he report to the first sergeant, this delinquent soldier, that he has the reason for absenting himself from the barracks in defiance of the well known orders, as follows, *viz.*—"

Cardine glared at the clerk.

"Don't be so damned officious. There's a new word for you. When I want your assistance in running this company I'll ask for it."

THE CLERK subsided mournfully in his chair. Cardine measured the soldier Lopez with a calculating eye. These two men who had been reported absent from barracks last night had done an unprecedented thing for men who had served so long under his iron discipline. Gruspe was a weak sort of man and before this

had been punished for drunkenness. His story rang true. Besides it could easily be checked. But this Cesario Lopez . . . Twice he had been mixed up in brutal assaults, in one of which he had used a bayonet. He wore constantly a sullen, dangerous look in his narrow black eyes. Men said he had deliberately shot a brother soldier in the excitement of an attack on a Moro village. That, however, was probably only soldier talk . . .

"What have you to say?" Cardine snapped at Lopez.

"I take the grass cutting for ten days," the man said, and he shot a hateful look from under lowered lids at the clerk, who sat watching him.

"They hate each other, those two," Cardine thought. He said, "What were you doing away from barracks all night?"

The man looked at him stubbornly.

"I was with my *querida*, sir," he said simply.

Cardine grunted.

"You marry her if you want to stay out of barracks," he said.

The clerk Annuncion half rose from his chair and made a quick movement of his mouth toward Cardine, as though in protest of what he had heard. A black look from the captain killed the words on his lips. Cardine said to Cabanatan gruffly—

"Twenty days cutting grass!"

The man Lopez muttered, still watching the clerk hostilely—

"The soldier Gruspe has received but ten—"

"Beat it!" Cardine snarled at him. "And one more break out of you and you go up before a 'one forty-eight and a half board.' "

The man pressed together his trembling lips, saluted and withdrew.

"Keep an eye on that bird, Sergeant," Cardine said to Cabanatan. "I never have liked his looks."

The old man nodded his head in mournful agreement, then returned his attention to the duty roster on his desk. For a long while there was silence in the hot room.

"I don't like it," Cardine muttered moodily, as he turned from absent contemplation of the awning-like *paraguas* shading the blaze of sun from outside.

Cabanatan tried, as always, to be helpful.

"It makes the whole company *triste*, Captain, to lose a good soldier like Malvar."

Cardine was listening to his own thoughts.

"No *kris* got him," he said with conviction. "I've seen *kris* wounds—hundreds of them. And I've seen plenty of *barong* work. If we were in Jolo it wouldn't look so queer. The Joloano uses a *barong* for his killing."

He turned squarely, facing the old first sergeant, and looked him in the eye.

"Cabanatan, have you ever seen a Cotobato Moro who carried a *barong*?"

The old man screwed his lined face up into judicial seriousness. He wanted his captain to see that he was giving the matter deep consideration before he answered in the only way possible.

"No, sir—I nebair see."

"Well, a *barong* did this job; no doubt of it. And you can't tell me that a Joloano journeyed away over here for any private killing."

Cabanatan looked hopefully at his captain. What, then, was the answer?

Cardine said quietly—

"No Moro killed Malvar."

There was complete silence in the orderly room. Officer's call came faintly from the guardhouse. Cardine rose wearily. The clerk stepped toward him, holding a clipped sheaf of papers in his yellow hand.

"Will the Captain plees sign the papers of the deceased? It is necessary to affix the signature of the company commander to the fact expressed in the report of the board of inquiry investigating into the unnatural death of the one, Malvar."

Cardine eyed the man distastefully. He had been transferred to the company as a corporal clerk a year previously. The men let him severely alone because he insisted in practising his pedantic book English on them and because he made no secret of the fact that he was out for the

sergeancy vacancy at present existing in the company. The old-timers resented this upstart ambition of a man they considered an interloper. Among themselves they derided him with the insulting name of *El Japoneso*—The Japanese—because of his slant eyes and yellow face.

Cardine disliked the fellow for the same reason that the men did. Yet, he was a perfect clerk. He gave no trouble, and his copybook penmanship made of the pay and muster rolls works of art. His papers never came back from headquarters for correction.

"I'll be damned if I sign them!" Cardine said violently. "I don't care what any board says. Malvar was killed by no Moro. And before I put my name on any certificate, I'm going to find out who murdered him. He was a damned good soldier and, by the Lord, his soul is going to rest in peace.

At this reference to Filipino superstition the old first sergeant nodded his head in solemn agreement.

"Yes, Captain," he said softly, "for a Scout not killed in battle it is necessary that his murder be avenged by his friends or family. Otherwise the *Assuan* will make torture of the poor soul of Malvar. It will writhe and whine at the place of death until proof comes that this Malvar had friends who love him—loveless souls can not rest in peace . . ."

The old man delivered this in the dialect, solemnly pronouncing each word. Cardine saw the swift fear that dilated the eyes of the yellow faced clerk. Then he managed a sickly grin at the captain.

"The sergeant believes the sayings of our old people," he said with an attempt at banter.

Cardine didn't smile.

"And don't you?" he asked sternly.

The clerk was doubtful. This Cardine was a man who so often smiled to himself under a stone face. Many times he could tell by twinkles in those cold eyes what the simple men of his race, who did not read the books on psychology, never suspected. He put on his most sophisticated smile and shrugged his thin shoulders.

"It is only for the old and unread to believe such tales of the senile," he said pompously.

Cardine gave him a searching look; but he did not smile. He turned abruptly to Cabanatan.

"Carry out those orders," he said briskly, "and if anything turns up, come yourself to my quarters. No matter what the *Chino* cook says, have me waked up."

"*Sí, señor,*" Cabanatan said, and both soldiers saluted as Cardine banged the screen door behind him.

THE NEXT morning Cardine did not take the company out to drill. And more surprising yet, he ordered Cabanatan to remain in the orderly room with him. The men were lined up in front of the barracks, staring curiously at the young lieutenant, who was supremely embarrassed at being entrusted with the command of the greatest fighting unit in the Scouts so unexpectedly. His first order was surprising. He directed each man armed with the issue *bolo* to unhook it from the belt and let it drop at his feet. When the company marched off Cabanatan and Cardine gathered up the leather sheathed weapons and carried them into the orderly room, where they made a grim pile.

Cardine lighted his pipe.

"Now," he said, "one by one, in the sun here where we have a good light."

Carefully, the two drew each *bolo* from its scabbard and inspected the gleaming steel intently, laying the weapons so studied in a separate heap to one side.

"You see," Cardine said, puffing at his pipe thoughtfully, "these blades are chunkier and a lot lighter than a Moro *barong*."

"Chungee?" That was a new one to the old man.

"See—" Cardine held one of the *bolos* up in front of him— "shorter, fatter —*Mas gordo?*"

Cabanatan's eyes lighted with understanding.

"Ah—yes."

"The blade is thicker, too, but they are

so much shorter than those the Moros use they are lighter. See what I mean?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Well, I looked at that wound of Malvar's pretty closely. A lot more carefully than the medico. Now if a Moro had hit him with one of those Jolo *barongs* it wouldn't almost have cut off the head, it would have cut a dozen heads off; especially as it hit him from behind, which means that the murderer crept up in back of him and had ample time to swing with all he had."

The old man nodded his understanding.

"I see plain, Captain, now why you look at these *bolos* of ours. But maybe one in some other company of the battalion was the one—"

Cardine turned, annoyed. He glared at the old man.

"Cabanatan, have I got to tell you about your own people? It is men who are intimate—who know each other well who kill. Is not that true?"

"It is true, Captain. It is the one-time friend or the man who can not be the friend who comes to hate."

"And the men of this company do not go to the *barrio* with those of the others?"

"No, Captain. They are men who do not like much the soldiers of other companies. They do not make the friends there."

The old man stared at the floor, a deep frown of perplexity on his brown face.

"But what I do not understand, Captain, is this carelessness of the soldier Malvar. On post he has never done the sleep and he is quick to see danger. The Captain remember how at Fort Picket he give the alarm when Moros came like pythons, so quiet were they in the new *cogon* grass . . ."

Cardine looked at him thoughtfully.

"I have been thinking of that very thing. There were the street lamps on his post burning all right when I came along. And besides, only a few days before we had cleared the brush out along the beat on No. 5. There have been many others killed there, and Malvar knew it. Every man who goes on that post has a finger on the trigger and his safety off, you can bet on that. I don't believe there's a Moro alive who could have caught that boy off guard . . . Well, let's go on with this job."

For some time there was silence in the orderly room, save for the rattling of the *bolos* as they worked through the pile. Each blade seemed an exact duplicate of the other as its scrupulously clean steel flashed blindingly in the sun. Not a trace of blood, not a suspicious speck marred the even sheen of their surfaces. Now and then one of them would bend with quickened scrutiny closer to an edge with a slight nick or a tiny fleck of rust. The numbers of these Cardine noted on a pad by his side. The business of discipline was not to be forgotten even in this most exciting quest. Dirty blades, now as ever, were worth a kitchen police . . .

Suddenly Cardine bent closer over a blade, turning it about in his hand so that the light caught it at all angles.

"What's Annuncion's number?" he asked quietly.

The first sergeant consulted a list on the desk beside him.

"*Numero* tairty-six," he said, his honest old eyes searching Cardine's face questioningly. Cardine held the blade closer to him.

"Look at this," he said.

THE OLD MAN wrinkled up his eyes. He drew in a deep breath. Under the crude guard below the handle of the blade a sticky mass filled the angle the guard made with the blade. The blade itself was scrubbed to a silver brightness. Cardine reached for a magnifying glass in a drawer of his desk. He studied every inch of the weapon through the powerful reading glass. The sergeant watched him, fascinated.

"There's blood in that cosmoline by the handle, all right," Cardine said. "And the blade's brighter, more silvery than the others."

The old man, leaning close, said—

"I think so—*sangre*—and the polish it is *differente* than those others."

Cardine laid down the glass and stared thoughtfully at Cabanatan.

"Yes," he said, "more like a silver polish than the Blitz the men get at the canteen—not so oily, dryer. The bird who cleaned this one wanted to make a better job of it than he'd ever done before. Well, he's gilded the lily!"

The sergeant was wordless with the significance of the discovery. He shook his head slowly from side to side. At last he said—

"I shall arrest the Corporal Annuncion—now, at once, or when the company comes back?"

"Neither one," Cardine said sharply. "And remember, if a word of this gets to the men I'll have your hide."

The old man grinned widely, showing his short, square teeth. He always did this at Cardine's ferocious threats.

"Nobody know," he said softly, as he stared with a pleased, dreamy look out the window. "Ah—maybe now that Annuncion go hang at Bilibid!"

"It'll take more than a polished *bolo* and some funny looking cosmoline to convict a man before a court-martial," Cardine said. "And maybe that stuff isn't blood after all. But if it is, Mister Gregorio Annuncion is going to have a warm time explaining what it is doing on his *bolo*. Today's the first time he's been out to drill with the company this month, and presumably his *bolo* has been hanging on his bunk all that time. No accidental cuts while gathering *bijucca* or clearing *cogon* grass will go."

Cardine got to his feet briskly.

"Turn these *bolos* over to 'charge of quarters'. I'll have this one back before they come in from drill."

Carefully he picked up *bolo* No. 36 and its stenciled scabbard, and strode out of the room. At the post hospital he was particular to ask for the major-doctor. The chap who had been on the board would probably not be any too sympathetic if confronted with evidence of murder which he had failed to see at his own investigation.

Spriggs Williams, the genial post surgeon, was an unusually capable man and a born soldier. He was one of the few men with whom Cardine could relax. Cardine showed him the *bolo* and requested that he maintain absolute secrecy about his suspicions. After a careful examination the medico said that without doubt there was human blood in the cosmoline under the guard. He looked at the Scout quizzically as he handed back the blade.

"What I don't understand," he said, "is why this chap, whom you've described as a savvy sort of *hombre*, should be so dumb as to use his own *bolo*. You'd think—"

Cardine smiled grimly.

"One would be like another once it was cleaned," he said.

Cardine walked gloomily toward his quarters. His appetite for lunch was gone. With all his vaunted discipline, he had a murderer in his company. More than the punishment of the guilty man was his desire to stamp out by his own private methods this specter that had arisen to threaten his boasted complete understanding of his men.

He knew, from long experience with the native soldier, that crimes blazed with periodic ferocity if the guilty ones were not immediately discovered and summarily dealt with. Outfits got entirely out of hand with booze. Once there was the case of a company, commanded by an easy-going captain, where the men became completely insubordinate and defied all the noncoms, because the first minor case of insubordination to a corporal had gone unpunished. Cardine was certain in his heart that men in his company knew who killed Malvar. He set his jaw as he strode on. He'd show them that there'd be no more murder in his outfit, if he had to shoot down the killer himself!

Ah Sam, the Chinese cook, greeted Cardine with his usual paternal chuckle.

"Got hot loll," he grimaced as his master threw his campaign hat on the *sala* table and sank wearily into a deep cane chair.

"Get me a whisky and soda, you yellow ape," Cardine yelled at him.

The old man let out his cackling laugh and pointed to the table. There, on a carved tray of Moro brass, was a new bottle of Perfection, a bowl of ice and a syphon. The tired lines of the soldier's face relaxed. He studied the old Chinese as he shot the soda into the tall glass.

"You old heathen, you!" he laughed.

Ah Sam was a great man to Cardine, and Cardine was a great man to Ah Sam. A deep affection had grown up between them in the ten years they had been together as master and man. Cardine had shot a Moro gone *juramentado* on the busy street of Jolo just before the crazed one was about to lop off the shaven crown of the old Chinese. From that day they had gone the same way.

Now Ah Sam was getting old. He was so thin his natty white coat hung about him like the rags of a scarecrow. His few teeth were long, saffron colored fangs. His bony legs creaked in his wide, pajama-like pantaloons. But his wise old eyes still held in them the fires of youth when a *fan-tan* game was on in the *barrio*. And he had a devilish sense of humor.

Now he stood with his bony hands on his hips, his head cocked to one side like an impertinent robin, regarding his master with calculating eyes.

"Major give plentee hell?" he asked with a knowing grin.

Cardine ignored him. He sipped his drink. But the old man was persistent. When his master was low he was there to help, either by clowning—which in the end always brought a roar from Cardine—or by more practical assistance.

"Afler dlink you tell'm," he said confidently.

And, sure enough, after the drink Cardine told Ah Sam about the murder and the evidence he had unearthed. His telling was not entirely a matter of sentiment. The old scoundrel was an habitué of the native village, where he went to consort in games of chance and to cock fights with his countrymen, who kept small shops there; and it was not impossible that he had heard talk of Malvar that others might not have.

DURING the tale the old man wagged and nodded his head. He pursed his thin lips and narrowed his eyes as though in deep consideration of the whole matter. When the story was done Cardine sat back, poured himself another drink, and said:

"I suppose now you have it all figured out. You'll have the murderer in here by the back of the neck before night."

The old man roared at this. He loved the sarcasm of his master.

"I flix," he said. "Can do, Ah Sam."

"How? How can do?" Cardine asked impatiently, his curiosity aroused by the sincere meditation of the old man and by the sudden gleam that had come into his long eyes.

Ah Sam looked down at his master. All drollery had gone from him. He said solemnly:

"Got womans flind—much talkee womans. Tell plentee things."

"*Cherchez la femme,* eh?" Cardine grinned. "Can't you be more original than that? I told you all I know about the only woman in the case."

But the old man was thinking his own thoughts. Suddenly he held up two talon-like yellow fingers, their long nails curling grotesquely. With his other hand he touched one of the fingers.

"Womans," he said.

Cardine grunted.

He touched the other finger.

"*Assuan,*" he muttered.

Cardine sat up and laughed.

"*Assuan?* What in hell has the *Assuan* to do with it?"

The old man grinned fiendishly.

"Filipino people fright plentee can do *Assuan.*" He shrugged. "No got *Assuan;* all same dream funnee people."

And thus Ah Sam, the descendant of Confucius, dismissed with a grin the belief in little gods. Cardine prodded his silence. The dawning light of impish delight that was growing in the old man's eyes aroused him.

"Tell me, you old crow!" Cardine roared.

Ah Sam became suddenly very serious. Though obviously bursting with his delightful idea, which seemed to afford him immense inward amusement, his uncanny reticence and love of the dramatic made him loathe to bare his scheme in its entirety.

Cardine relented.

"Come on, now," he coaxed. "If your scheme seems reasonable, of course I'll try it out. But, damn it, Sam, I don't want to be let in on some weird shindig that will make me the laughing stock of the post."

Ah Sam knew that he had won.

"Can tlust Ah Sam," he said. "Claptain tly?"

"Oh, hell! I'll try."

An expansive grin came over the withered face.

Then briskly, in his odd pidgin English, Ah Sam unfolded his idea for the consideration of his master. Cardine listened seriously to the fantastic plot. When the old man was done he sat for a long time, thoughtfully sipping his drink. At last he swallowed what was left in his glass and rose from his chair.

"All right, we'll see," he said. "Go to it . . . How about lunch?"

Ah Sam rubbed his hands and grinned fiendishly, an unholy light in his eyes.

"Can do," he said. "Got hot lolls!"

AFTER LUNCH Cardine called on the commanding officer at headquarters. The major, a young captain of the regular Army breveted to the Scouts, played the part of a high commander weighted with great responsibility.

"That's a pretty big order, Cardine," he said judicially. "A third of your company on guard every day. Raise the dickens with the training schedule—and the very devil with morale."

"To hell with morale, sir. This thing's got to be gone into while it's still fresh in their minds. The other seven companies will hardly crab at getting out of guard. You let me run this thing, and inside of a few days, I'll know whether my suspicions are correct or not."

"It means putting the same detail on every four days instead of every thirteen, as now," the major objected weakly. He stood somewhat in awe of the redoubtable Captain Cardine, and he made this protest solely to register his military knowledge before the adjutant.

"That can't be helped," Cardine said coldly.

The major had done his duty: he had protested against an innovation, as a good officer should. He shrugged his surrender.

"All right. I'll get the order out at once. You start tonight."

That night the perplexed Sixtieth Company was detailed for guard, although they were not due for another day. And the inexplicable order that brought this unheard of happening about, stated that until further orders this same company would do the entire guard for the post. There was much growling in the barracks. The other three companies had ribald comments to make anent the bungling job the Sixtieth must have made on their last tour to be disciplined in this extreme manner. Cardine went carefully over the roster of the guard for the first night with his first sergeant. Six of the names were checked with a blue pencil: each at one time or another had had words with the unfortunate Malvar. The list was headed by Annuncion.

"Put the first three on No. 5 tonight," Cardine said, "and Annuncion on first relief. That'll put him on the second time from three to five in the morning." He smiled grimly at the first sergeant. "That's the best time for the *Assuan* to walk, eh?"

But the old man did not smile.

"There is moon," he said solemnly, "and before the daylight he will sink into the sea. That red moon makes great heat in that water, Captain, and that steam he come up and turns loose on the world the spirit of the *Assuan* if one be near."

"So I've heard," Cardine said dryly.

"Hence my present arrangement. I fancy Mister Annuncion will be impressed by that phenomenon in spite of the unorthodox attitude he's so proud of in daylight in a crowded barracks."

Company clerks are not carried on the duty roster. When the list for guard was posted on the bulletin board Annuncion protested violently to the first sergeant. What was this game? He was well aware the *sergento* had never liked him; but, *por Dios*, this was outrage! He would see the captain at once.

When Cabanatan told him stolidly that it was by the captain's orders that all men in the company, even down to the cooks, should do a guard, for the practise, he subsided. But he sat alone on his bunk, morose and muttering until the call for guard mount rang over the hot parade.

SPRIGGS WILLIAMS called on Cardine that night, and the two sat and talked in low voices on the screened porch. A brilliant white moon covered the world with a gilding weirdly fascinating; and because of it Cardine had ordered Ah Sam to put out the hissing acetylene lamp he sometimes read by. The house was some distance from the end of the officers' line, almost isolated in a little grove of great coconut trees. Below the quarters the parade sloped abruptly to the brush tangled shore line.

Cardine pointed a finger toward the beach.

"You see that row of street lamps? Beyond the last is the native *barrio*, of course. This way, not far from the second light, we found Malvar. That's No. 5 post—the four lights you see along the beach. No. 4 connects with it down the road back of the post, and 6 down this road in front of my quarters—takes in the Q. M. buildings."

"We've a grandstand seat then," Williams grunted. "Can't be over two hundred yards from here, is it?"

"They're scared as hell of moonlight, you know," Cardine muttered. "You've noticed, of course, how they seal the shutters up at night? Stifle themselves to keep that accursed moon out of their faces. They think if it shines on your face when you're sleeping, you wake up *loco*. With us, it's intense darkness that is apt to be terrifying. But with them the *Assuan* gets in his dirty work with the moon as a sidekick—"

The telephone tinkled. Cardine answered it in a low voice, then rejoined the doctor.

"From Cabanatan at the sub-guardhouse down at the dock. I put him there to check on 5 every half hour."

"Well, suppose one of the innocent ones sees an *Assuan?* Won't he leave his post—be scared out of his wits?"

Cardine smoked thoughtfully for a long moment. Then he said:

"I know these rowdies of mine pretty well, Medico. Scared out of their wits, yes. But I'm betting that the only one who leaves his post will be the man who did Malvar in. There are ten posts, and that means I'll have the whole company run through in three days. The moon will be just right."

"That'll mean nine men on 5, then," the doctor said. "Suppose it's one of those on another post? Or a noncom?"

Cardine shrugged.

"Suppose a fellow had a pain in his side," he said. "Your surgical experience would suggest a test for appendicitis, wouldn't it?"

Williams grinned and nodded.

"I see your point. You think you have the guilty one bracketed, as the artillery say, in those nine?"

"I'm not certain of it," Cardine said. "But what else can I do?"

The two men drank from their long glasses and stared out at the shimmering bay. Regularly at half hour intervals Cabanatan called on the telephone and reported that the sentry on 5 was walking his post in a "military manner."

"Well," Cardine said irritably, "my first three choices of suspects have all done one tour without event. Cabanatan says at each inspection they seemed on the job every minute. All of 'em scared

out of a year's growth; but not one of them left his post. He's had them under observation with glasses from a window of the sub-guardhouse. They've connected up with 4 and 6 regularly."

"Maybe the next trick they do will shake them a bit," Williams said. "They've all been under a strain—and after midnight, you know, a man's morale goes down. You kept coffee away from them as I suggested?"

"Yes," Cardine said. "No coffee at the sub-guardhouse tonight. Noncoms's been raising hell about it, Cabanatan says."

"It all helps," the doctor said thoughtfully. "By the way, what have you got on the first two?"

"Santos," Cardine said, "was after Malvar's woman. You know their attitude on those things. Malvar's been living with her since we left Corregidor. She's a Tagalog, and tricky. Along comes Santos with another offer of matrimony. Getting in some heavy work when somebody tips Malvar off. At it hammer and tongs with bayonets in the squad room when Cabanatan came in and separated them. Santos swore for all to hear he'd get Malvar. That was a week ago."

"That's good circumstantial evidence," the surgeon said, sipping his Scotch. "How about the other?"

"Sacuat? He owed Malvar for an equity in a fighting cock, but never came across. The bird cleaned up in the *gallera* a couple of Sundays ago. Sacuat demanded his cut. It ended in a grand row, and the next day Malvar found his champion dead — poisoned. Blamed Sacuat. More threats, that everybody heard."

"Mm-m. Sounds good too. Did Annuncion ever—"

"I've done a bit of sleuthing there, too. No one has a good word for him. Men hate him for his airs. Talks too much English. Malvar, you know, was pretty dumb. Had an ugly, ludicrous face. Annuncion used to kid him: called him *Feo*—Ugly Malvar. Taunted him about Santos and others and the *Tagalog dalaga*. I suspect Malvar threatened to kill *him*—but you know how these Scouts are. A murder among themselves, and a white man can't get a word out of them. They believe only the relatives of the deceased have a right to vengeance. Can't understand the impersonal punishment of the law."

THE MOON sank lower and became a sullen orange color. For a long time there was quiet on the porch. Williams' head had sunk on his chest. Cardine could hear his light snores. The Scout stretched out in his long cane chair and stared at the orange moon.

"It's about time," he thought, and he rose and looked at his watch. He had been a little ashamed to tell the doctor about his conspiracy with Ah Sam, and now, as the time drew near to go on with it, he felt foolish because of his own credulity. Still . . .

Softly he called through the screen door into the house. The surgeon snored peacefully behind him. A shuffling of *chinelas* answered his call. From the gloom of the back part of the house a dim figure appeared and stood silent in the oblong patch of moonlight that came through the door. Ah Sam, grave and silent now, stood immobile and stared up into his master's face. His long, bony hands were folded across his stomach, his old eyes lifted to Cardine's gleamed in the moonlight with diabolical excitement.

"Bring the woman here," Cardine said.

Ah Sam turned without a word. His shuffling steps died away in the rear of the house. Cardine heard whispering in the kitchen, a woman's voice, then the patter of the old man returning. Pushing before him a white clad figure, he once more stood before the Scout captain.

"Flix ladee plitty," Sam said, and his almost toothless mouth opened in a ghastly grin of triumph as he pointed at the trembling girl.

Cardine surveyed her in silence. She

was young, with a rounded face, dead white in the moonlight. Her fine nose, and small, thin lipped mouth showed the mark of the *mestiza*. She was shrouded with a white robe of *piña* cloth, which accentuated the darkness of her great eyes.

Cardine was amazed at her beauty.

"How in hell did a private ever keep you?" he growled in Tagalog.

The girl twisted her locked fingers, and her shoulders writhed coquettishly. Her slow smile revealed lovely teeth.

"Damn my soul," Cardine thought. "If I ever saw a cause for murder, here it is!" Aloud he said—

"You remember what Ah Sam, the Chino, told you?"

The girl twisted as though embarrassed.

"Yes, sir."

Cardine stared at her, forcing the strength of his glance into her dropping eyes.

"Look at me! Did you love Malvar?"

The girl dropped her eyes.

"Of course, sir. He was my husband. Why should I not love him?"

"Did you love any other man?"

The girl raised innocent, shocked eyes.

"But why, sir? Never, never did I look at other men."

Cardine never relaxed his brutal, penetrating stare.

"Do you want the *Assuan* to avenge you?"

At mention of that sinister name the girl shrank from him.

"There is never escape from the *Assuan*," she said in a low voice.

"And the wails of the *viuda*, the widow, will invoke his wrath; is not that true?"

"It is true," she answered in a voice so small that the words hardly came from her beautiful mouth.

"Then let us go," Cardine said, and he pointed to the door.

"Here is the little stick," Ah Sam muttered with a grin, and he held out to the woman a large black crucifix.

"No! No!" she breathed and would have pushed it away, her eyes starting from her head.

"Take it," Cardine said gruffly. "Only for that the *Assuan* may take you to join your man."

Humbly the girl reached for the cross. The Chinese laughed aloud.

"Plentee luckee," he said.

DOWN the dusty road toward the sub-guardhouse Cardine conducted the widow of Malvar. Spriggs Williams he left snoring on the porch.

"Probably think the whole scheme ridiculous," he reflected, "and kid me the rest of my natural life if it falls through."

The girl shrank against him under the shadowing trees, her eyes fixed with dread fascination on the sinking red moon. They passed the Q. M. buildings without challenge. Sentry probably back in the brush at the other end of his post near No. 5 . . . Cabanatan met them at the guardhouse, his eyes wide with wonder at the sight of the white clad woman. Cardine felt a little embarrassed as he tried to be casual in his explanation to the old man.

"You know my old *cocinero*—my Chino cook, Ah Sam?"

Cabanatan kept staring at the shrinking girl.

"I know, Captain. He is a wise one, that *viejo*."

Cardine led the old man a little away from the woman so that she might not hear. Lowering his voice he said in the dialect—

"It was the idea of this old man when I tell him about the matter of Malvar that if the widow prayed at the scene of death, and so called up the *Assuan*, as your people believe possible, that the murderer, if present, could not control himself because of the fear that would seize him."

"Should the *Assuan* come and that man be there, his soul would cry out his guilt for all the world to know, it is certain," the old man said with deep conviction. His eyes became troubled. "But, Captain, this Ah Sam has the name among the men for much playing of the joke.

He is the one who sell the old chicken of Malvar back to him for twenty pesos when but a week before he pay to Malvar only five. He color that white chicken red, Captain, when at birth it was the color of the meat of the coconut."

"Perhaps," said Cardine gravely, "it is because of that that he would make amends to the soul of Malvar. He can never give back that fifteen pesos."

"It may be so," the old man said, shaking his head doubtfully. "But where women enter into the affairs of soldiers there is always much trouble," he muttered.

"Hell, it's worth a trial," Cardine said sharply.

The old man said with humble earnestness—.

"It may be that the act will offend the Virgin Mother of God—for to Her, the *Assuan* being an ancient Filipino spirit, is without rank in heaven."

"The widow is in her bridal robes," Cardine said. "She will pray at the spot where they found Malvar."

"*Seguro,* it will arouse the *Assuan,* those prayers," Cabanatan said, shaking his head solemnly.

"The Virgin will protect her," Cardine said.

"But the men of the company who watch—they will know when that woman prays that they are with suspicion in the Captain's eyes. And if no *Assuan* appears or no guilty one is there to confess, there will be much talk in the company."

Cardine's jaw hardened.

"We've got to run that risk. It is the only thing I have feared. Tell me, Sergeant, if the murderer is there and no *Assuan* should come, would the very act of this woman calling to the soul of Malvar put great fear into a guilty one?"

"I think it would be so, Captain. By the faces of those men, I can tell."

Cardine grunted with satisfaction.

"Then it's not such a damned fool scheme as I was beginning to think . . .

"You have talked to the men?" he then asked. "As I told you?"

"Yes, Captain. As is my duty I plead with them all to say what they know. But you understand my people. They fear very much to talk of such things."

"Damn it," Cardine said impatiently, "do they know that if they have knowledge of this they may be punished with the murderer if they do not speak?"

The old man stared at the floor of the guardhouse.

"I tell them, Captain," he said softly. "But a great fear is in them all. They say it is the duty of the family."

Cardine pointed at the shrinking girl, who stood trying to listen to the conversation.

"There is the family," he said.

He looked sharply at the widow.

"Do you understand what we say?" he asked gruffly.

"I do not know the Illocano language," she said in a frightened voice.

"She lies like hell," Cardine said in English. He turned toward the first sergeant. "March the whole detail to the place. The moon sinks low."

Cabanatan hissed to the sergeant of the guard who ordered the reliefs to fall in. He gave his commands in a low, frightened voice. The men lined up in front of the white walled building, throwing a ghostly shadow under the somber red light of the moon. The girl stood beside Cardine, trembling violently, the black cross pressed against her breast. The heavy shoes of the men beat the ground with a rhythmic tread as the guard, at trail arms, defiled in column of two's and headed into the path between the high mangrove bushes along the shore.

Cardine pushed the shaking girl before him.

"*Sigue*—go on!"

She clung to his arm, trying to hold him back.

"*Tengo temor!* I am afraid!" she pleaded.

He glared down at her.

"Do you wish the men to drag you?" he said brutally.

She began to sob.

"I go," she said, and like a drunken

woman she stumbled forward in the wake of the marching men.

Cabanatan led the way, a lantern bobbing above his head, its light pale under the lowering moon. A line of stout posts about a hundred yards apart, and topped with street lamps, marked out the trail that had been cut in the tangled brush on No. 5 post. The column halted abruptly at the sharp challenge from the sentry. Cardine pushed forward with the girl. The sentry, Annuncion, his bayoneted rifle at a precise port arms, blocked the path. Cabanatan stepped aside so that the captain and the sentry confronted each other in the narrow trail.

"*Numero puesto mo?* What's the number of your post?" Cardine asked sharply.

"*Numero cinco,* sir," Annuncion said, his staring eyes fixed on the girl at Cardine's elbow. Cardine noted that the man's voice was barely in control and that the rifle shook against his chest.

"There has been talk," Cardine said slowly, "of the coming of the *Assuan* to this post. Men of the other companies on guard since the murder of Malvar have reported it. That is bad for Malvar, who was a good soldier. So his widow comes to pray to this spirit."

The men of the guard who heard shuffled their feet and eyed each other, fear stamped plainly on their flat faces. Cardine pointed into a small clearing that lay between them and the bay.

"It was there," he said, "by that old *banyan* stump that the body of Malvar lay. Sergeant, line the men up so that they face that place and have them stand at ease. And tell them that if they were friends of Malvar they will pray for his soul."

"Ah, there you are!" Williams came puffing through the brush and stood beside Cardine. "Fine bird you are to leave me up there to miss the show."

But Cardine was staring at the skinny figure of Ah Sam, who stood grinning beside the red faced doctor.

"What are you doing here, you yellow devil?" Cardine said.

The Chinese showed more of his gums.

"I come show doctor—I come find out you likee hot lolls blekfast."

"That gal made a hit with him," Spriggs Williams said. "Hot rolls nothing. Talked about her all the way down here, the old rascal."

"Plitty, plitty glirle," Ah Sam said, pointing a scrawny hand at the shrinking *dalaga.*

"He seemed to know where to find her, all right," Cardine said in English, "when I sent him to the *barrio* to locate her today. And they've been jabbering in that back room of his since dark."

"Quite a romance, if you ask me," Williams said. "Why wasn't I let in on it?"

"Just a shot in the dark," Cardine said. "You know he's an intuitive devil, that chink. Put the idea in my head about the girl. An *Assuan* expert himself, it seems . . . Well, let's get on with it."

Nothing but the low wash of the waves on the beach and the distant cry of night birds broke the eery silence of the clearing as the soldiers of the guard took up their position facing the sea. Annuncion, still standing at attention with his rifle at port arms, ventured to speak.

"I shall walk my post, sir?"

"You fall in on the right of that line," Cardine said sharply.

The corporal came to an order arms, about faced precisely and took his position on the right of the line. Cardine led the trembling girl forward, almost carrying her limp body. The moon painted the calm bay a dying red. There was utter stillness in the ranks.

"Great God!" the doctor muttered. "This is ghastly—look at that stinking moon!"

Cardine pushed the girl to her knees.

"Cry out to the soul of your man," he whispered fiercely. "Loud—loud, so that all may hear!"

The woman fell forward against the rotting stump, her hands pressed tightly against her eyes, her white covering, like the wrappings of a ghost, fluttering in the night wind. Her body shook as with a

violent spasm of fever. The cross lay fallen against the foot of the stump. Cardine picked it up and held it before her. He drew one hand from against her eyes and twisted the fingers about the silver figure nailed to the black wood.

"*Mira!* See, there is the dying body of *Jesucisto*—hold it before your eyes against the light of the moon!"

"Good God!" Williams muttered, staring with startled eyes at Cardine. "The man's a tragedian—he's a part of the whole thing."

The Chinese at his elbow chuckled, his little eyes fixed appreciatively on the scene.

"Plitty, plitty, plitty," he intoned in a low, sing-song voice.

THE MOON touched the bay as the girl began her low, moaning cries. She held the cross outstretched in her hands, her body swaying from her hips in cadence with her cries. A murmur ran down the line of men and one by one they drew back from the trail against the wall of brush. Cardine stood, his arms folded majestically across his great chest, and stared down at the girl like some implacable god demanding sacrifice.

There was a sudden, panic stricken crashing in the brush behind the rank of men. Cardine drew his pistol and, without turning, said hoarsely—

"Bring that man back!"

There was the sound of a heavy blow and a pleading cry. Then Cabanatan, panting, his eyes staring wildly, threw to the ground before Cardine the writhing form of a man. The Scout captain kicked him with the toe of his boot.

"Get up!"

It was the soldier Gruspe, who had been given ten days grass cutting for dancing the *jota* after taps. The man was obviously drunk. Oblivious of Cardine's boot, he stared at the moaning girl with distended eyes, a low gurgling coming from his throat.

"He must have hide the *vino!*" Cabanatan wailed.

"Shut up!" Cardine said. He seized Gruspe by the back of the neck and pointed toward the now silent girl. "You kill Malvar?" he said harshly.

"*Dios mio! Jesu! Maria! Josep!*" the man screamed, and awkwardly he made the sign of the cross.

"He wouldn't have the guts!" Cardine said savagely, and he threw the man aside. "Go on with that bellyache!" he roared at the girl.

The men in the rank shuddered, muttering, eyeing Cardine with terror. But they felt sure that should another break ranks, that pistol that they had seen smoke at Baksak would be as merciless for them as any Moro. The girl, too, saw that pistol, and she sent a wild wail of fright up into the night.

Cardine stood over the panic stricken girl.

"Unless the *Assuan* comes and strikes down the murderer of Malvar you will suffer the pains of hell forever," he muttered close to her ear in Tagalog. "Pray, plead, intone for that spirit to come; it is your only chance for salvation!"

The girl raised her fear wracked face to Cardine. All color had been drained from it and it looked like the visage of a corpse that had died in mortal agony. The sinking moon bathed it with an unearthly red as she turned from Cardine and stared toward the sea. For a long moment she stared at the mysterious, glowing circle of red which seemed to jerk bit by bit into the flat water of the bay.

"He do not come," she said. "And the moon goes."

She rose slowly to her feet and stood, swaying slightly, looking beyond Cardine toward the line of soldiers. They stared at her with fascinated eyes, gripping each other's arms and holding their rifles close against them. A sudden tenseness caught and held them all.

Cardine turned and followed the girl's eyes. He was amazed at the stoical calm that had settled over his men. He saw Spriggs Williams, standing a little to one

side, his mouth open, his eyes staring in wild wonder at the Filipino woman. There was not a sound except the swish of the flashing wings of the great bats and the rhythmic wash of the bay against the shallow shore.

Then the moon went out. A stupefying blackness settled over the world. Cardine could not even see the man directly before him. A sharp cry went up from the the men. Cardine looked up, conscious of a new brightness in the sky. Toward the native village at the farther end of post No. 5 a streak of unearthly light was shooting toward the black heavens. It was so close that in the silence of the night he could hear the crackling of the flames. Then as he stared, struck dumb by the coincidence of this phenomenon with the abrupt darkness, a flash of eery color shot high out of the licking flames. He was aware of Ah Sam standing, plucking at his sleeve.

"Flo't Julee—Flo't Julee!" he cried gleefully. "Makee plentee flirework!"

Cardine saw that plenty fireworks were indeed in evidence. Rockets hissed into the air, leaving trailing tails of glittering sparks; Roman candles leaped out into wreaths of colored light against the brighter background of the flaming house.

"Lord! The *barrio* is in flames!" Cardine cried.

"No—no *barrio*. This woman's house, he blurn. Can do many flunnee light, *Assuan!*"

As he spoke, Ah Sam raised his voice so that all in that dumb audience could plainly hear his solemn words. His bony arm stretched toward the flaming *nipa* hut that once had been the *bahai* of Private Mariano Malvar and his Tagalog woman.

"*Assuan* come now," Ah Sam singsonged sonorously. "He plentee uglee!"

A TERRIFIC scream rent the silence of the night—the widow of Malvar . . . Cabanatan, his teeth rattling together, still held the dim lantern. By its light Cardine could see the utter horror in the starting eyes of the woman. As one bereft of all resistance and volition because of a panic too extreme for human nature to endure, she stood there gibbering, flapping her arms like a clockwork doll gone wrong.

The hardy little Scouts, all of whom had braved a dozen fierce combats, reached the limit of their endurance. No discipline could control the wild fear in their hearts. Here before them was the ultimate proof of all they had heard from the old men of the villages: the ravaging *Assuan* before their very eyes. The old first sergeant, himself panic stricken, weakly tried to hold them. It was no good. With wild cries they scattered, tearing through the brush toward the solid sanctuary of the subguardhouse. What was a court-martial, in prospect, to the certainty of the *Assuan?*

It all happened so swiftly that Cardine was only brought to the necessity for action by the sound of a rifle shot, which banged out sharply close at hand. He stared about him. The girl lay inert at his feet, her outstretched hand still clinging to the cross. Cabanatan had dropped the lantern. His revolver shook in his hand. He was prepared to sell his life dearly although he knew in his heart no bullet would have effect on the *Assuan*. Spriggs Williams stood, still staring at the colored lights of the burning shack. Ah Sam teetered up and down on his sandaled feet, jabbering an exultant mixture of Chinese and native words. Not a man of the guard was visible.

Cardine raised his pistol and strode toward the place whence the shot had sounded.

"Come on!" he said to the others. "Spread out and push through this brush."

As they approached the thick growth of bush beyond the trail they saw a moving figure in the dim light from the street lamp that marked that part of post No. 5. The man came on with the steady, regular march of a sentry on

post, his rifle at the correct angle over his right shoulder. He challenged.

"Annuncion!" Cardine called.

The dapper little clerk came to a port arms, his hands striking smartly on his rifle as he snapped it across his chest.

"Advance, Officer of the Day, to be recognized!" he intoned in his precise English.

They hurried forward, Cardine in the lead.

"What was that shot?"

"One of them let go at the *Assuan*," Williams said, trying hard to grin.

Annuncion spoke coolly.

"It was the shot from my rifle, sir."

The sentry stood aside so that his captain could pass him in the narrow trail. He jerked his head briefly toward a dark form lying on the ground a few yards away.

"Private Cesario Lopez, deceased," Annuncion said succinctly.

Cabanatan cried out, pushing forward after Cardine.

The little group stood over the body. It lay flat down on its face, the bayoneted rifle flung out before it. The scattered rays of the street lamp showed trickles of blood running from a great tear in the back of the head. Impassively, Annuncion, still at a proper port arms, gazed at the dead man with the others. Cardine turned and stood looking at the sentry. He held his revolver lightly against his hip its muzzle steady, not a foot from the soldier's heart.

"Why did you kill him?"

The man was entirely composed. He spoke calmly in his careful English.

"I am the corporal, sir; and I do not like to do the guard. The 'Manual for the Interior Guard' does not suggest the use of the non-commissioned officer on the post. Therefore, sir, until this *Assuan* departs, I must walk the post like a private. That is the talk of the men in barracks, sir. I must therefore to kill Lopez that I may return to my more normal duties."

Spriggs Williams gasped aloud.

"That's cold blooded for you."

He stared at Cardine. Why did the man stand there so calmly listening to a double murderer? This Annuncion was undoubtedly a psychopathic case . . .

"Why Lopez?" Cardine asked with an odd calm.

The soldier shrugged.

"He stand back here, sir, in the bushes, and he aim at that Leoncia Lavarias, wife of the deceased Malvar—so I shoot."

There was a momentary silence. Annuncion eased his rifle a little and looked down at the dead man.

"And besides, sir," he said softly, "this present deceased, Cesario Lopez, kill to my very great friend, Mariano Malvar!"

There was a stunned silence. Then Cardine said—

"How do you know he killed Malvar?"

Annuncion looked bored. He shrugged.

"Today, sir, the Chinese of you he come to my orderly room for the precise information, *viz:* the abode of that wife of Malvar who calls herself Leoncia Lavarias. Thinking myself that this widow should have the comfort and the assurances of friendship from a good friend of the deceased such as myself, I did then lead this Chino to the *bahai*. There also being some oratory by the First Sergeant Cabanatan *re* the duty of the soldiers of Sixtieth Company *re* the reporting of information concerning this concrete case of murder, I think I may find such clues."

"You say you were a friend of Malvar?" Cardine said in a harsh voice. "I have learned that you nagged hell out of him."

The corporal smiled tolerantly. "He afforded me much pleasure, that ugly Malvar. And since he has become deceased, I have miss to him incredibly. What more proof that he is my friend? And besides, my Captain, there was broad hint from the Sergeant Cabanatan that one who collated important information *re* this crime, might soon possess the chevrons of the sergeant."

"What did you find at the house of Malvar?"

"The widow of that ugly one beguiling

this present deceased." He jerked a shoulder toward the body on the ground.

Ah Sam, who had been an eager listener, here chimed in. He shot a long arm toward the dead man.

"He klisee plitty glirl plentee," he chanted. "We lisem by window. Hear *mucho* plentee. Plitty lady say can do now mally him because he killee Malvar!"

Cardine glared at the Chinese.

"You heard this? Why in hell didn't you tell me instead of talking me into these damned theatricals?"

Ah Sam grinned naively.

"Likee flirework. I go much talkee Ah Whan at officer club. Plentee flirework he make Flo't Julee for officer. Flive peso, Ah Whan say he can do. He flixee at *bahai* of Malvar. He stay there when woman go. Moon go down. *Shoosh!* He light many flirework. Make plentee *Assuan*. Make frighten that Lopez!"

"Why didn't you report what you heard?" Cardine said sternly to Annuncion, who stood impassively listening.

"I have the pride, sir. I fear that again the Captain will say that I become officious."

Cardine ground his teeth and cursed softly. Williams said:

"My Lord! Do you suppose there's any truth in all this?"

"Ah Sam doesn't lie," Cardine said. "He's crazy about fireworks. He merely combined business and pleasure in his own heathen way!"

CARDINE bent over the inert form of Leoncia Lavarias and dragged her to a sitting position. Cabanatan had retrieved his lantern and now held it so that the feeble beams played on the white face.

The girl shuddered and opened her eyes. She stared up at the faces grouped about her.

"Why did you kill Malvar?" Cardine rasped at her. His hard eyes bored into her. She shrank from him, uttering a low scream. "The man Lopez, your *querido*, is dead," Cardine went on. "Before the *Assuan* got him he confessed all. Speak!"

The woman shrugged.

"*No importa*—it doesn't matter," she said. "Now that *Assuan* has his blood, all fear leaves me. My own soul is left to the Virgin, and she being a woman of beauty, I do not fear. He, Cesario, I loved. And to have him, that Mariano must die. So he does this for me." She turned appealing eyes on Cardine.

"How did he do it?" Cardine said with fierce insistence.

Leoncia turned her eyes from face to face. They came to rest on Annuncion. A sly, triumphant smile widened her mouth.

"It is the joke we have, Cesario and I. This man, Annuncion, has the great airs and much talk in the English language. The words of his people are not good enough for him. He makes this talk to me, thinking to beguile me. Bah! And because he talk so much about the beauty of his penmanship and the shining of his arms, which he says are brighter than any in the company, my Cesario—who dislikes this man because he has an undoubted way with women—says, 'Let us use this bright *bolo* of the scholar Annuncion. It hangs by his bed and is never used. Why shouldn't it be shining?'

"So in the night Cesario comes and uses this bright *bolo* on the ugly Malvar. And because it shines so, it wipes clean of the blood with ease. And in one hour that *bolo* again hangs on the bed of this man of so much talk."

The girl laughed and stared maliciously at Annuncion, who was looking somberly over the bay.

"But," Williams broke in, "Malvar was found here in the brush. He was on post that night."

The girl laughed again.

"His post at this end is only a few puffs of the cigaret from our *bahai*. I call love to him from that house. When I call love to that ugly Mariano he come. Nobody will know, I say, if he comes to me for a little while; and besides, that night the moon had its greatest beauty.

And when he come there is Cesario with the silver blade of the talking Annuncion . . ." She made a gesture illustrating the sudden blow. Her face twisted fiendishly; her teeth bared. Then she relaxed. She shrugged. "And so Cesario, who is a bull of a man, dragged this Mariano to this place, threw his arms into the sea."

"*Was* the bull of a man," Annuncion said softly in English, and his somber eyes lighted as he turned them back to where a deeper shadow darkened the trail.

Williams took a deep breath.

"Well, I guess that settles it. We all heard the confession. What do you think?" He looked at Cardine with questioning eyes.

Cardine shrugged.

"It's true, all right," he said. He turned to Cabanatan.

"Sergeant, confine this woman in solitary at the main guardhouse." He jerked a thumb toward all that was left of Lopez. "Have a detail drag him back to the sub-guardhouse. I'll call the hospital and have him taken off your hands. And by the way, you can tell those *Assuan* addicts that it's all O. K. He's gone for good."

The party moved toward the trail, Cabanatan half dragging the woman. As they reached the trail Annuncion shouldered his rifle smartly and started a steady march along his post.

"Just a minute, Corporal!" Cardine said.

The man halted, about faced, and came to a brisk port arms. His impassive eyes fixed themselves in calm inquiry on his captain.

Cardine said to Cabanatan—

"Did you tell the men that vacant sergeancy went to the one who cleared this matter up?"

The old man hung his head.

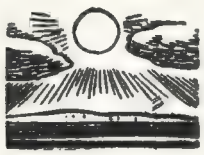
"I say maybe the Captain he think that way, sir."

"He does think that way," Cardine said. "Relieve Corporal Annuncion from post and send him back to barracks. I don't want sergeant's walking post . . . Come on, Spriggs, I'm hungry as hell. We'll get this pyrotechnic cook of mine back to normal."

Ah Sam cackled with delight.

"What you got breakfast, Sam?" Williams grinned.

"Got hot lolls," the old man called back as he scuttled on his sandaled feet down the narrow trail.



The STRANGER *with the* HANDY GUN

By JOHN JOSEPH

"THERE goes a bad actor."

That is what the Smilin' Kid remarked about five minutes after he got his first slant at T. Jackson Cort. The stranger had strolled leisurely into the Paystreak Bar and introduced himself to the Kid, and had then treated the house. He claimed to be from New York. He was dressed city style—derby hat, boiled shirt, white spats and everything to match—and he carried a gold headed cane to set off the picture.

The only thing about him that smacked of the West was his six-gun, and he was packing that all wrong—belt buckled tight around his waist, gun a foot too high, and the stock turned to the front. Nevertheless there was something about him that smelled a lot more like Texas than it did of the Big Burg back East. He looked too much like a rank tenderfoot to be a real one, if you get what I mean. Hence the Smilin' Kid's crack when the big stranger rambled back in the direction of the games.

A stiff four handed game of draw was on at one of the tables, and Trinidad Jack, one of the hardest boiled gamblers in the West at that time, was a heavy winner. There was a difference of opinion about Trinidad. Some called him a plumb square shooter, but most people had him sized up as the slickest card shark that ever followed the mining camp booms. Too sharp ever to get caught, that was the way they looked at it.

Anyhow it was a regular thing for him to clean up a poker game, and just as regularly he sluffed his winnings away, trying to beat faro with some crazy system of his own. He was a little man, thin and nervous, and a bit cross eyed. You never could tell just what he was looking at.

Cort lazied up to Trinidad's table and looked on for awhile, then dug up a roll of yellow boys and edged into the play. He started with fifty dollars' worth of chips, which he stacked up on top of what was left of his roll. Trinidad kept right on winning, mostly from Cort, and Cort was soon down to his bundle of bills. He bought another fifty dollars' worth of chips and tossed a paper down on the table.

"I'm playing that behind my roll," he barked, mouthing his cigar.

Trinidad looked the paper over.

"I reckon it's all right," he said, with a glance at the other players. "It's a certified check for five thousand, on the Merchant's National Bank in Frisco."

Nobody objected, and Trinidad passed

the check back. Cort slipped it under his chips. A slim kid pulled a chair up close and sat down just behind Cort. He looked like a stage cowboy.

The game seesawed along for an hour or so, then suddenly struck a hot spot. Cort was dealing. It was dealer's ante, and the man at Cort's left bet twenty before the draw. Trinidad doubled the bet. I was standing behind Trinidad, and I caught a glimpse of three queens in his hand.

The next two men dropped out. Cort doubled Trinidad's bet. The first bettor laid down his hand, leaving only Cort and Trinidad. Trinidad stayed. He drew one card and caught another queen. Cort drew one card and bet a hundred. Trinidad doubled him again. That set Cort to studying. He scratched his head.

"If I had one more jack," he said at last, "I'd raise you out of your chair. Damned if I wouldn't! As it is, I reckon I'll have to pass."

Trinidad grinned.

"I'll *loan* you a jack, if you want to bet," he said.

He had a jack with his four queens, and he flipped it over to Cort, face up.

"It's yours, if you want to bet it," he said.

Cort laughed.

"That's a good one!" he grinned.

"I mean it," Trinidad said shortly.

Cort looked him over.

"What kind of a game is this, anyhow?" he growled suspiciously.

"A gentleman's game—I hope," Trinidad came back at him.

Cort discarded one card and picked up the jack.

"On the square—you mean what you say?" he demanded, short and sharp.

"Sure I mean it. Bet your hand as it stands. It goes with me."

"You heard what the man said, gentlemen?" Cort smiled easily. "I'm tapping you," he added, and he tossed the check into the pot.

Trinidad shoved in everything he had, around two thousand dollars.

"Call you—as far as it goes," he said, and he slapped down his four queens.

Cort tossed his cigar away and laid down the jack and four aces. You could have knocked Trinidad off his chair with a lead pencil. He stared at the hand, then at Cort. He shoved his chair back a good two feet, but he didn't get up and he made no move to draw. He was cleared for action, at that, so I sidestepped out of the line of fire. The slim kid got up and beat it, quick and fast.

Cort was grinning. Trinidad's face was ghastly white. His eyes fairly spit fire. A tricky play of words had completely fooled him. He had played Cort for a jack full, or four jacks at best. Cort's trick talk was all fair enough, too; it was merely a new angle to a sort of side play as old as the game. Any kind of misleading chatter goes in a poker game, as a matter of course.

But Trinidad sensed something else. We all did. Cort had done the dealing. It was a hundred to one shot that he had planned the whole play in advance, that the slim kid was his pal, that the kid had slipped Cort a cold-deck, and then beat it with the other deck as soon as the threat of gunplay gave him an excuse.

That made it hard for Trinidad. He knew in reason that he'd been cold-decked; but there wasn't a chance on earth to prove it, for the kid had disappeared with the other deck. That was the way it shaped up, so there was nothing left for Trinidad but to take his medicine lying down, or shoot it out with Cort.

Cort made no move to take the pot down. He sat, leaning back, with his finger tips on the edge of the table, grinning across at Trinidad. Cort was the first to speak.

"You men all heard what he said," he ventured at last, but he never for a second took his eyes off Trinidad.

It was plain that Trinidad was mad enough to eat red hot nails, but he managed somehow to keep a grip on himself. No doubt he sensed the fact, as we all did now, that Cort was a dangerous man to mix it with. Trinidad had killed

four or five men in his time, and nobody ever had questioned his nerve; but Cort was acting altogether too confident and cool to be safe, and Trinidad took plenty of time to let his nerves quiet down.

At last he opened up.

"Why don't you rake in the pot, if you think you won it fair?" he asked quietly.

"I'm going to—" Cort smiled—"just as soon as I find out whether you're a sport or a—piker!"

Trinidad was on his feet in a split up second. The two shots came so close together that they sounded almost like one. A little spatter of dust flicked out of Cort's coat collar. Trinidad's legs doubled under him and he collapsed on the floor. Nobody saw where Cort got his gun from. When Trinidad drew, a gun showed in Cort's hand, just like that. It was a thirty-eight; his forty-five was still in its holster. He slipped the thirty-eight into a side coat pocket, then got to his feet and raked in the pot. The Smilin' Kid came back on the run.

Came another roaring report, and Cort dropped like a poleaxed steer. Trinidad had rolled up on one elbow and fired from the floor. The slug had struck the side of Cort's head as he turned to face the Kid. Cort gasped his last as the Kid turned him over. Trinidad was carried to his room in the Sherman Hotel, and Doctor Fiske presently got the bullet out of him. It had struck high on his chest, and had lodged near the spine. He finally pulled through, but he spent the rest of his life in a wheel chair.

The LAST BORN

A Jungle Story

By LEO WALMSLEY

FROM the foot of the Buaru Mountains, reaching westward for eighty miles, is an absolutely level plain. There is nothing, save an occasional cone shaped *kopje* to break the monotony of this plain until the eye rests on its western boundary, where a great river, the Lombani, divides it from the escarpment of a low and equally monotonous plateau, and where for a brief interlude the bush gives way to the most riotous and verdant vegetation.

In the most inaccessible depths of this jungle, under the gnarled roots of a mighty sycamore, Chui of the River had her lair. It was a well chosen spot. There was a hundred yards of papyrus between it and the river, and the river for a mile up and a mile down had steep banks which no crocodile could possibly climb. Veldward the jungle gave ample concealment. Above, the sycamore, thickly hung with trailing lianas, formed a perfect screen from all eyes inimical to the safety of a leopard with a newly born family; and in four directions there were paths, or rather tunnels, offering safe avenues of retirement should danger threaten.

Chui had shown an unusual fastidiousness in the making of this lair. She was not a young leopard. Her skin was scarred, her fur was not lustrous, her teeth were yellow and already showing signs of decay. The two blind and mewing cubs which nestled so closely to her

body made her third family, and were destined, she knew, to be her last. She had been extraordinarily unlucky. It seemed that a cruel destiny had pursued her from the day of her first mating. She had lived nearer the mountains then, beyond what is now the railway line. All of her first brood had died within a few hours of birth, their death due to one of those mysterious ailments to which the young of all wild creatures are liable.

She had found a new mate during the next rainy season. Of the family springing from that union two had survived infancy, but during their early cubhood had died from eating the poisoned carcass of a sheep which she herself had killed and left in a thicket some miles from the native village of M'tumba.

It was the association of that tragedy which had caused her to select for the time being a retreat so far from the nearest habitation of mankind, against the desires of her present mate who, having tasted the flesh of domestic animals, was loath to leave what was to him an easy hunting ground.

The plain is not what it used to be so far as game is concerned. There was a day when eland and hartebeest and zebra covered the open portion of it in their thousands, when gazelle were thick as sheep on an Australian farm. Now there are precious few antelope. A few reed buck where the grass grows long, waterbuck in the actual river jungle; these are all you are likely to see in a week's march from one end of the plain to the other.

Yet Chui had obtained her wish. Her cubs had been born. At the age of three days they were feeding well, they were unusually active, they gave every promise of reaching that goal which is the main objective of all individual life—maturity. Except to a mother's eye, they were not very beautiful however. They were quite blind, and their shape was not yet the graceful shape of the leopard. They were scraggy, their fur was short. They mewed and fussed and stretched their little limbs in ungainly movements, and were almost ludicrous.

But to Chui they were the very fulfilment of life. The feel of them wriggling against her body, their tiny cries, filled her with a perpetual ecstasy, in which, however, an element of fear prevailed. They were her last born . . .

It was shortly after dusk on the third day that Chui's mate set off from the lair. It could not be said that the arrival of a family had filled him with unmitigated joy. Paternal love is not of the obvious type among the cats—and, indeed, he had reason to feel bad tempered at this business which had taken him so far from his usual hunting grounds, and brought no consolation whatever.

He was interested in the cubs, of course. Chui, however, had not permitted him to go within a yard of them. His duty was to go out and hunt food for her, to keep a sure guard on the approaches to the jungle and, should it be necessary, fight and give his life for her and her young. It was not a conscious duty. It was instinct; something entirely beyond control, like the beating of one's heart.

He took the tunnel which led, for the first hundred yards, downriver, for the breeze that had sprung up with the sun's departure came from that direction. He was a splendid specimen: two years younger than Chui, and in his absolute prime. He moved with an uncanny absence of noise, his lithe body carried low to the ground, his head reaching forward, his long and muscular tail outstretched and swaying rhythmically from side to side.

Clearly he did not expect to find any game within the actual precincts of the river forest. His progress was steady and determined. But he kept to the shadows of the tall trees until he was a mile from the lair, when he turned abruptly toward the plain. It was quite dark by then. The stars were hidden in a dense canopy of cloud that had spread westerly from the mountains during the late afternoon. An ideal night for the purpose the leopard had in mind.

His course led almost due east toward the mountains. He took advantage of

every scrap of cover that was not unduly distant from the general line, for a leopard, more than any of the big cats, hates the open. He dodged under mimosas and forced his way through patches of tall but withered grass.

He came to the beds of dried up tributaries of the Lombani and he followed them as long as their course was favorable. He traveled swiftly and silently and fearfully, more like a shadow than a creature of flesh and blood. He never paused for an instant, not even when a flock of guinea fowl, roosting in an acacia under which he passed, took to the air with noisy wings and frightened calls, making the veld echo again. Nor did he hesitate in his stride when a hyena, getting his wind and guessing his purpose, slunk out of a thicket and set off in discreet pursuit.

AT MIDNIGHT Chui of the River lay in her lair, beneath the old sycamore tree, her two cubs for once still and sleeping, curled up tight into the long silken fur of her under body. But Chui herself did not sleep. Her head was slightly raised, her neck extended so that she could test the full quality of the air with her nostrils and ears. Dark as it was in the plain, here in the shadows of the forest an absolutely impenetrable blackness prevailed.

Even Chui could see little beyond a mass of leaves here and there in the overhead canopy, where the sky was not hidden, and served to throw them into vague relief. In front, behind, on all sides was an almost palpable wall, through which, at odd intervals, a firefly would throw its starry gleam and eclipse itself, leaving the blackness more profound than before.

Chui was ill at ease. Her mate, she knew, was not hunting in his accustomed place tonight. They had lived in this locality for a fortnight now. Without exception he had gone down river for about a mile, where a game path led to the water and where the lay of the country was admirably suited to a leopard's hunting tactics. During that time he had met with fair success. A waterbuck, two reed buck, a wart hog, an ant bear had fallen to his cunning. But last night and the previous one nothing whatever had come.

Tonight she knew by every one of her acute instincts he had gone far beyond that place. She was uneasy; she was aware by that intuition which is the gift of all mammalian females that danger in some trenchant yet obscure form threatened. It was not that she was troubled directly as to the safety of her mate. Her fear went deeper than that. It was for her young, her last born. Without him she must starve—and her precious cubs must die. Without him she could not hunt. Without him her purpose—her great life purpose—could not be fulfilled.

At midnight the mate of Chui of the River paused on the crest of a low ridge which overlooks the maize fields and village of Matumbas and, lying down flat upon his belly, began an eager reconnaissance. The sky was still overcast. The wind, though a trifle lighter, still blew from the south. It brought to the leopard's keen nostrils a variety of scents, which he carefully sifted. The scent of mankind, the scent of dogs, of sheep and goats and oxen. They were all familiar to him. He was concerned only in placing them in their exact relativity.

The animals, he knew by experience, were penned close up to the dwellings. He must find out which pen was the most favorably situated to his plan. He decided at last to examine one which lay at the extreme western end of the village, where a maize field offered good cover almost to the huts. He set off, very slowly, taking a zigzag course down the slope of the ridge, sniffing every foot of the way and never raising his body an inch higher than was necessary for free movement.

A dog suddenly barked. He stopped, every muscle in his body tense. He waited for two minutes, then he went on as before. He soon found himself at the edge of the first field. He did not enter it, but bore round toward the west until he reached the one which was to cover his actual advance to the pen.

But here once more he halted. A sound had caught his ears—the cry of a goat. Not from the pen. From the field itself, away off to the right. He sniffed and sniffed. At last he got its scent, very, very faintly, for there was no wind at all where he stood. But the scent was a sufficient corroboration of the message the cry had brought. A goat—alone in the field! A full grown one. Not a kid. A kill worth making, and with a modicum of risk to run.

He turned about and stealthily followed the edge of the maize for three hundred yards before entering it. The crop was ripe and dry; the leaves crisp and noisy, yet not a leaf seemed to stir as he forced his body through. A minute and he came to the end of it and, thrusting his head through the last few stems, he was aware that an open space was before him, from the center of which rose a densely foliaged mango tree. He stood as still as the earth itself, as though his magnificent body were a part of it, a sculpture done in clay. He could see the goat. It was standing under the tree, straining at the rope by which it was tethered to the trunk, and bleating hoarsely.

The scent of it was powerful. It did not, however, disguise the scent of man. But the leopard expected that. He knew that such trees as this were used by the natives during the heat of the day for the shade they offered. He could detect in that faint human scent nothing significant of immediate danger. But he waited. A sound to his rear caused him to turn round. It was the hyena, which had come to a halt at the edge of the maize, waiting its chance to join in the banquet. The leopard bristled with anger, but he did not move backward. The goat was bleating again. It had got his wind. He turned his head once more in the direction of the tree; then, with no more sound than the fall of a pin, he drew himself up and walked swiftly forward . . .

But he did not reach the goat. He was halfway across the clearing when his quick ears detected a stirring in the branches of the tree. He paused abruptly. He caught the scent of man, strong almost as the scent of goat. He braced his muscles for a spring to the safety of the maize beyond. But before his brain had sent the guiding impulse to them, a jet of red fire shot out of the branches, a deafening crack echoed over the veld, and the mate of Chui of the River rolled over on to his side, and breathed out his spirit to the night.

ALL THROUGH that night of impalpable blackness Chui of the River awaited the return of her mate. When dawn came and no sign of him, she knew he was dead.

She did not grieve for him. There was no sentiment in her philosophy of life. But as she looked at the two cubs tugging at her breasts a cold rage beset her, and she seized hold of a dead branch that lay on the ground and chewed it into pulp with her great yellow fangs.

She was hungry. She had eaten nothing for two days. She was feeling weak and stiff and unaccountably restless. A younger leopard, left thus with a new born family, probably would have deserted them straightaway, realizing the inevitability of their fate, and would doubtless have found a new mate before many moons had passed.

But Chui knew that she could never mate again. That she would bear no more cubs; that these were indeed her last born. And every fiber of her being called to her to protect them, to nourish them, to watch them grow, to teach them the ways of the wild, to see them safely past the borderland of maturity before she died.

She dare not leave them, however. She knew the jungle too well. She must feed them and not feed herself. She must conserve every ounce of strength until their eyes opened and they began to walk, when she could carry them in her mouth to the hunting downriver and wait there until a kill came close to hand.

But hunger is a terrible thing. Two

days later Chui realized she must eat or die. The cubs were still healthy, still thriving, but the toll they took of her strength was enormous. Already the time had come for them to vary their diet of milk with flesh. It was imperative that Chui should kill.

It was late one afternoon that the leopard got up from the lair and took a swift walk round the immediate precincts of the sycamore trunk, sniffing the air as she did so, and listening most intently. The jungle, as far as she could tell, held nothing that was likely to disturb the peace for awhile to come. There were signs, however, that it contained something which, with fair luck, might solve her present problem.

She went back to the cubs and licked them nervously. Then she suddenly raised herself on her hind legs, spread her fore paws on the tree trunk, and sprang neatly on to the lowest creeper hung branch. She did not pause there, but climbed almost vertically until she found a branch halfway to the top, likewise creeper hung, but offering a tolerably clear view on to the lair.

Along this branch, not thicker than a man's thigh, she stretched her body, her paws curled up underneath, her neck thrust out, her chin resting on the bark, her tail reaching back to the main trunk and almost straight. She spent a minute adjusting her balance to this extraordinary pose, and then becoming quite still, she seemed to disappear—a marvelous illusion due to the protective coloring of her body, and the way in which she had taken advantage of the foliation to mask her head and shoulders.

For fifteen minutes nothing happened, nothing at least that human ears or sight or nostrils would have detected. Then came a sudden chattering from the jungle upwind: a sound of swaying branches, of rustling leaves. The tip of Chui's tail trembled. She glanced down to the lair and saw that all was well. She sniffed the wind, and then held her breath as the leader of the troop of monkeys came into view, walking along a branch not fifty yards away. He was followed quickly by two females, one with a baby riding pick-a-back, its little arms clutched firmly round her neck. The leader, a full grown green monkey, hesitated for awhile and then came on, the whole troop now in full view behind. The troop was on trek.

Chui did not breathe. Only by the tip of her tail and the bright green luster of her eyes would you have known what a lust of excitement inflamed her mind. She took another glance at her cubs. They were wriggling now, and mewing very faintly. The jungle in their immediate proximity was hidden. Chui did not therefore detect a slight movement of the grass just there, nor did she hear the gentle rustling of it. The leader of the monkeys was now on the next tree, sitting on his haunches, and peering nervously about him.

Did he suspect?

He barked and, seizing a twig above him, stood up, and then looked down, breaking suddenly into a volley of harsh shouts. *He* saw that rustling in the papyrus. He saw one of the traditional foes of the tribe—a huge python—slowly but deliberately approaching the trunk of the tree, and monkey fashion he wanted to show how little he cared when all was safe.

The whole troop joined him in derisive shouting. Then, as though he had recalled a more important business, he leaped on to a branch of the sycamore, ran lightly along it, leaped to another, dropped down two, and alighted not a foot away from Chui's head.

Chui did not spring. It was not necessary. She simply raised a paw, shot it out, and brought it down on the monkey's shoulders in a movement too quick for any eye to observe. With that same movement she drew the creature to her mouth. She bit once into the neck vertebra: then, oblivious to the hysterical shouts and screams of the terrified troop, she drew herself up, turned on the branch, and with her quarry held lightly between her teeth started her descent.

From that moment until her feet

lightly touched the ground the lair and her cubs were hidden: a brief period of time in which the python reached its wicked head out of the jungle, seized the nearest cub by the neck, swung it up clear of the ground and disappeared into the papyrus that stretched toward the river.

IT WAS long past midnight. A waning moon had risen over the Buaru Mountains, bathing the plain in mysterious light, and throwing silver ripples on the dark, slow water of the Lombani. At the foot of a big acacia bush, halfway between the village of Matumbas and the lair of Chui of the River, a leopard cub sat on its haunches, licking its lips and peering up into foliage, where Chui was completing a job which had started at the Matumbus water hole two hours before, where Chui was jamming hard into the fork of two branches the half eaten carcass of a calf.

She came down shortly and joined her cub. She licked her lips, carefully cleaned a patch of blood that had caked on her offspring's shoulders, then very leisurely set off toward her lair, the cub walking closely to her side. They made a wonderful picture as they went along in the light of the half moon. The cub—it was a female and now two months old—had lost its ungainliness. It was slender and supple and in all its movements as graceful as Chui herself.

They did not make a sound. With the moon behind them they were jet black shadows. With the moon shining on them they were ghosts, stealing with soundless tread across the veld.

It was nearing dawn when they reached the lair. Tired and well fed they lay down, and slept—slept for once as creatures who have gorged to repletion sleep, with their senses only half alert. And throughout the day no warning of danger came to them. A distance of fifteen miles lay between them and Matumbas, and the avenging party of natives did not find the calf until well after noon. It was the third that had been killed since the slaying of Chui's mate by the white man from the railway line. There was among these villagers an old hunter who knew well whose work these later raids had been. It was he who realized the futility of waiting at the acacia for such a crafty one as Chui. She would never return, he said, so long as there was a man within an hour's march. They must track her down to her lair while her stomach was still full and her mind drowsy, and strike before the sun had set.

The spoor of the two was not easy to follow, for it was the height of the dry season and the ground was dry and hard as rock. Dusk had fallen when the hunter halted the party half a mile from the sycamore, and divided it into three. The first he sent straight into the jungle with instructions to form a line of men between the river and the jungle edge; the second he ordered to do likewise—but *along* the jungle edge, to a given point.

The third party, in which were the strongest and bravest men, he took himself and he led them for half a mile upriver, where he turned them into the jungle and formed them into a line roughly parallel with the first. Then suddenly the hunter struck a tom-tom he carried. Once—twice—three times . . .

The whole maneuver was wonderfully executed. Before the echo of that last drum beat had died away across the veld, red lights stabbed the jungle gloom at innumerable points, and before Chui of the River had awakened from her heavy sleep and realized the danger that threatened her and her precious cub, a solid wave of fire was sweeping down toward the lair, in the grip of the strong evening wind, and the smoke of it was already in her nostrils. She sprang up instantly. She faced the wind. She turned her head toward the river—toward the veld. On all sides but one the fire was coming on. It had got a good grip on the river papyrus, in spite of the wet soil. It was reaching high into the creepers of the trees on all sides but the upper river one, and it was from their direction that the sound of the drum had come.

She was trapped. She knew it. But in the fear that seized upon her there was no thought of herself. Alone, there were a dozen ways by which she could still escape. Her sole thought was for her cub, her precious last born, now licking her thighs and whimpering in pitiful terror. She turned and faced the wind again. The leaves in the sycamore above were red in the glow of the fire.

She seized the cub in her strong jaws and took a couple of strides along the tunnel that led directly to the veld. Flames and the powerful scent of man drove her back. She tried the upriver tunnel. She heard this time the rattle of arms. She turned back and stood irresolute for a moment. Then she looked toward the river, saw a long horizontal flame licking the dry and brush-like tops of the papyrus, sweeping along with incredible speed, and realized that to be the one possibly safe avenue or retreat, for beyond it were no human enemies, only the cool, safe river. She dropped the cub, picked it up with a firmer hold—and crashed straight into the jungle.

For a dozen yards there was no fire, only a choking wall of smoke. Then, from her left, a great flame came reaching down upon her like a giant, blood stained scimitar. She crouched, hiding the cub under her fore quarters. She leaped up again and charged straight through a vortex of flame. She found a half burned patch beyond. She passed it in two leaping strides and reached a patch of swamp. But there was no safety there. From all sides the flames were coming. She crashed through and reached another burned area.

She saw in front a furnace of flame, reaching ten feet into the air—the river edge, the last barrier to safety. But here the papyrus was dryer than in the jungle for its trees were exposed by daytime to the sun. Ten feet—in places the flames were twenty feet in height, and the crimson light of them reflected in the river made it seem like a torrent of molten lava.

Ten feet, twenty feet in height, and six yards through. Alone she could have done it with ease. But the cub was heavy, an unwieldy mass to be carried in jaws even as strong as hers. But Chui never faltered. She gazed at that devastating, frightful barrier. She tightened her grip on the loose folds of her cub's neck, she crouched back, took a short, quick run, and launched herself into the air, through a flame that singed every hair of her body, alighted on the very edge of the mud cliff, and then, unable to arrest that terrific momentum, carried on over the cliff and into the river, falling with a splash that sent a great jet of water high into the air.

TWENTY miles upriver and on the opposite side to that in which Chui had her lair is another plain, which being uninhabitated by human beings, and by law a wild animal reserve, supports an extensive population of game. Why Chui had not discovered the existence of this plain before is a problem which I can not solve. But it is well known that the leopard will exist in districts long after all other predatory creatures—for want of food—have gone.

The plain was in every way ideal for the completion of Chui's great life purpose: for the growth and training of her last born.

Neither was any the worse for the experience it had gone through. Their fur had grown again, before the rains commenced, and to all outward appearances the elder leopard looked as splendidly strong and well as she had ever done. It was only when she engaged herself in some fierce struggle with a hartebeest, or larger antelope, that her age became evident; an unusually quick panting, an unusual exhaustion afterward.

But that made little difference to her purpose. They made a lair well away from the river in a dense thicket of thorn, and every night they went out together, the mother allowing the cub to choose the ambush, to carry out the first assault, to do everything that lay within the power

of its ever growing strength. It was now more than half grown. In a month it should be quite independent, and fit to start life on its own responsibility. Already it had killed, with Chui's assistance, many of the smaller antelope, and as long as a fortnight ago had brought down a hartebeest calf—would have probably killed that, too, had not the bull appeared on the scene and made necessary Chui's intervention.

There was much to be learned yet, however; much that could be acquired only by experience. For the time being game was plentiful. There was scarcely a night but what they might have had the choice of a dozen kills. It would not always be like this. The numbers of other predatory animals might increase—the antelope migrate—and it would then require all the skill of a trained and experienced hunter to secure food. It was not that Chui anticipated death for herself in the near future, but she knew that for her purpose to be fulfilled her cub must walk alone, that they must not hunt together a day after that in which the younger one proved her education to be complete.

Every hunt now was a test of this. Every success the cub achieved was an ecstasy to the proud heart of Chui, every failure a cruel doubt. There came a day when, contrary to the usual custom of leopards, they went out after the sun had risen and, keeping to the thick grass which had grown everywhere since the rains had started, set off for a certain open veld, favored by a certain species of reed buck.

The cub took the lead and set an unusually eager pace. Perhaps they both realized that the climax of their lives had come, for although Chui kept a discreet distance to the rear, she was wildly excited, as though it was the first hunt of her life she was embarked upon. There was in the ecstasy that filled her mind no strain of sadness. The devotion she bore toward her last born was purely altruistic. Parting meant nothing to her but an absolute fulfilment, a symbol of a purer love than human mothers know when they sacrifice a child's career to their own sentimental and foolish egoism.

For a mile the cub led on. Then suddenly at the side of a patch of mimosa it came to a halt, for, standing alone, not fifty yards away upwind, was a half grown giraffe, serenely cropping the leaves of the thorn and evidently oblivious to everything but the pleasant taste thereof. In two seconds Chui was at the side of her cub and both of them were standing absolutely still. The calf was alone only that its mother was some distance away, a hundred yards perhaps. Its head was just discernible over the top of an upwind acacia. But it, too, apparently was quite oblivious to danger.

Chui gave no sign of what was in her mind. Here indeed was a supreme test. She kept perfectly still. She was aware, however, that her cub was trembling with suppressed excitement, that it was bringing to bear all the craft, the restraint, the cunning it had learned. The giraffe went on cropping its tender food, but working slowly downwind. At last it was feeding on the side of the bush nearest to the leopards.

The moment had come. The cub crouched down on its belly, and very slowly began to squirm forward, its head just sufficiently raised to keep the calf's shoulders in view. The grass was thick, but it thinned out near the bush itself. The cub's pace moderated accordingly. It went more and more slowly until at last it seemed to be scarcely moving at all. Then, when perhaps four yards separated the two, it did halt, but not for long. With eyes fixed steadfastly at the calf it raised its body very, very slowly, it reached out its neck, it gave an involuntary growl, and in the same instant it lurched forward, took a spring, alighted high up on the giraffe's tall shoulders and, burying its fangs deep into the base of the neck, swung completely round and let its full weight bear on that vital fulcrum.

A full grown giraffe would have fallen, so sudden, so perfectly timed, so magnificent was that attack. With a scream the calf subsided, and the cub flung itself side-

wise just in time to escape being crushed. But it was back again at once, tearing at the wound it had made; and when Chui came up, already the hunt and all that it signified to the two leopards was over.

The hunt—but that was not all. Even as Chui reached the calf, the mother of it, stung to frenzy by that scream of death, came from behind the distant bush, and with pitiful heroism galloped straight down upon them. She had eyes only for her calf. She saw it sprawling dead upon the ground. She was aware only, by dull and incomprehensible pain, of Chui's fangs in her shoulders, aware only by seeing the older leopard sprawling on the ground that she had shaken her off in a mad frenzy of fear.

She did not know that Chui in that attack had broken off her two upper fangs; that she was mad with rage and pain; that she was fighting her last fight . . .

The giraffe lowered her long neck and smelled the body of the calf. She saw the older leopard get up, and felt once more that pain and a weight on her shoulders. She shook her body again and felt something at her feet, that was not her calf. She kicked once, twice, with her heavy hoofs and, becoming dizzy and weak, stumbled and rolled over on the ground, with the hot blood from a severed artery pouring in a convulsive stream on to the body of the calf, and on to the body of Chui of the River.

For those two kicks delivered in the blind agony of death had struck the leopard in the middle of her back, dislocating the vertebra and paralyzing the whole of her splendid body. She still lived. But her eyes when they opened had lost their fiery luster. She looked about her and saw her cub calmly lapping the blood that poured so freely upon the ground. She felt no anger, no ecstasy, no sense of a task completed, of a life over and a life begun. A vulture was circling in the air above. Chui closed her eyes and yielded to the numbness that was creeping through her limbs like the growing shadows of night.

A Tale of Morocco

ALIBI

By GEORGE E. HOLT

The stroke of danger awaits the moment of seeming safety. —MOORISH PROVERB

SO FAR as the outside world—as represented at the moment by the multitude which thronged the great marketplace of Tangier—was aware, the brown figure shuffling his worn slippers across the cobblestones toward the stroke of danger was a poor devil of a charcoal burner from the poverty stricken Anjera hills, which were a burned brown silhouette in the east, beyond the tidal river El-Halk, beyond the blue crescent of Tangier Bay.

That he was a countryman they would have held manifest by his slippers of hide, instead of the soft yellow goatskin affected by city folk of every rank, no matter

how poor. By the brown homespun *djellab* of coarse wool; by the patches of contrasting material with which the garment had been repaired; by the bare brown legs, corded with muscle but without an ounce of fat to the dozen.

That he was a charcoal burner was evident from the marks of his trade which besmeared his *djellab*, which had scrawled hieroglyphics on the skin of his legs, and which had imposed smudged finger touches upon the brown, black bearded face protected from the midsummer African sun by the immense hood of the *djellab*, which left little of that face exposed to view.

That, then, is what the world of the marketplace knew the shuffling figure to be.

But the shaven head beneath the woolen cowl knew that the world was in error —as was most eminently desirable. He knew that the feet in the hide slippers—which, by the way, were unpleasant to the sole as the narrow hot bridge which spans hell—and the skinny muscled legs, and the shaven head, and all that went with them, belonged to Sidi Hassan Sanhajji, who, by that name, would be known to few people in all Morocco, but who, by the name of Al-Lateef the Clever One, would be a familiar personage to every man, woman and child in the marketplace, and far beyond its confines.

In a land where history is still retained by the spoken word, and where the events which attend the life of an era are recorded—so far as the common people are concerned—only upon the tissues of the brain, there were, at the moment, probably a thousand people in the marketplace who could have given the curious inquirer a fair summary of those matters which had pushed into the dark background of forgetfulness the name of Sidi Hassan Sanhajji, but had replaced it with the name of Al-Lateef the Clever One, written in letters of fire.

They would have told, beyond a doubt, that Al-Lateef, before he became Al-Lateef, was an upright, worthy citizen, respectful of the Sultan, the laws and his fellowman. That he had held high office. That he had accumulated some wealth. And then, very swiftly, that enemies had conspired against him with the result that he had been deprived of office, the mind of the Sultan turned against him, his property confiscated out of hand, his father murdered, his family stigmatized. Wherefore they would have thought it quite proper that the calm, reserved, respectful Sanhajji should pass away, and that a revenge loving, deeply hating individual should take his place.

And thus they would come to tell how Al-Lateef the Clever One acquired his fighting name. How his enemy the *basha* of Tangier had awaited the arrival of his bride in the customary silk covered box borne by a donkey—and how Al-Lateef had stepped from the arriving box to plunge a knife into the *basha's* black heart . . .

Of the manner in which the civil authorities, having learned that Al-Lateef was in their city, had closed the gates against him—and of how Al-Lateef, proclaiming loudly that he *was* Al-Lateef, had been ordered outside the city walls by a *basha* convinced that it was a crazy man who jibed at him, for who except a lunatic would have loudly proclaimed himself to be Al-Lateef, for whom the whole military police were searching? . . Of how he had tricked a would-be assassin into a situation which had caused him to be killed by his own hirelings . . .

And thus they would have continued through a lengthy epic, arriving at last, without doubt, at the information that a new misfortune had again flung a heavy hand upon Al-Lateef the Clever One.

His younger brother had been decoyed to Tangier and was now held prisoner by the *basha* in his palace . . .

Thus the world saw the charcoal burner; Sidi Hassan Sanhajji saw Al-Lateef—and the deities who guide human footsteps saw something which neither the world nor the man in the brown *djellab* perceived.

They saw that the hide slippers were leading Al-Lateef the Clever One across

the marketplace to the Place of the Three Gates, there to meet deadly danger; there to send a soul to the Place of Last Accounting, there to begin another episode in the struggle to defend himself against his enemies and to bring them to judgment.

OF THE WAITING bolt Al-Lateef was all unaware—except as he was quite perceptive of the fact that every hour, every minute, which he spent in this accursed city of Tangier was a minute, an hour, of danger. At the Place of the Three Gates the ancient wall bore a faded Arabic document which offered a reward for the head of a certain man, thereby declared outlaw, which was of sufficient size to cause the hunted one to doubt the moral stamina of even friends and relatives. The placard was signed by the *basha* of Tangier, and bore the names of Al-Lateef in large and conspicuous script. But its date was of some months previous to the present moment, which goes to show that Al-Lateef had friends who were above the temptation offered by five thousand Spanish dollars.

And now that dog of a *basha* had seized the younger brother of Al-Lateef the Clever One, and was holding him a prisoner in the palace; so Al-Lateef had come to Tangier in disguise. He had learned that the *basha*, for reasons ungiven, had set an hour five days hence for the execution of his youthful prisoner. Al-Lateef pondered that frightful news, wondered if it constituted a trap devised by the *basha* to lure him to Tangier in an attempt to save his brother, or whether it was merely the base nature of the *basha* taking revenge for Al-Lateef's continued existence, in a state of liberty.

Whatever the *basha's* reasons might be, Al-Lateef promptly discovered that his threat was not an empty one, that he really intended to kill the boy. Thereupon he summoned to his aid all the guile of which he was capable, with the result that his brother's deliverance awaited only the arrival of a friend—a man who could, and would, unlock the prisoner's door at the appointed time; a man whose life was pledged to Al-Lateef . . .

Just as he reached the Place of the Three Gates, just as his lips formed a grin at the sight of the placard offering the reward for his head, a rider dashed recklessly through the Marshan Gate, and Al-Lateef found himself rolling in the dust.

As he scrambled to his feet, in a red haze of anger, he became conscious of several facts. One, that the bulky neck cloth he had been wearing to conceal the lower part of his face had become loosened, had slipped down around his shoulders. Another was that the horseman was calling him unbearable names for having been in the way. And a third was that the rider was an ancient and vicious enemy—the *khalifa* of Tangier.

Even as these three facts hammered at his head, he became aware of a fourth: the *khalifa* had stopped his cursing and, with a gasp of surprise, had uttered the name of Al-Lateef. It steadied the bearer of that name as perhaps nothing else could have done, for it spelled deadly danger. He looked about. Who were witnesses to this affair? Only an old blind beggar squatting at one of the gates, two women, wrapped to the eyes in *haiks*, shuffling away, a porter having trouble with a stubborn, overladen donkey.

These things he saw in the time one word might have been spoken. The *khalifa's* mouth had not yet closed after the gasped "Al-Lateef!" when the brown hand of the man he had knocked down flashed beneath his robe. He sprang to the side of the *khalifa's* horse and ere that official could do more than start to raise a hand in defense, Al-Lateef had dragged him from the saddle and thrust the knife through his throat.

Al-Lateef was conscious of a squall of fright from one of the women, who had turned to look back. He let the body of the *khalifa* fall to the ground, pulled the hood of his *djellab* over his face, and darted toward the gate ahead of him—the gate that led into a business thoroughfare, which, in a few score steps, would

give him an exit into the maze of narrow streets and passages which honeycomb Old Tangier.

As he turned the huge corner of the gate, he came to an abrupt stop, then proceeded at a more moderate pace—not as a man in haste, but as one merely intent on going somewhere in the course of the day's work.

Coming toward him were three riders whom he recognized with a single glance. They were the *basha* of Tangier, the *kadi*, or judge, and Jonathan Brand, an American resident.

Al-Lateef knew that they saw him, but that their attention was held by that which they saw beyond him—the fallen *khalifa* and the people now rushing to his aid.

As instantly as he had recognized the riders, he had placed them in their rightful categories so far as he himself was concerned. The *basha* was his mortal enemy, who was offering great reward for his head. The *kadi* was a venerable good man, just in the law, righteous in thought and action. The American—Al-Lateef had once befriended him, had once clasped his hand in friendship.

Al-Lateef bowed his head, passed the trio, turned swiftly to the right, where a street not more than four feet wide offered escape. Already there were shoutings at the Place of the Three Gates; already the sound of people running. The pursuit was on. He quickened his steps. Had he been recognized? By the *basha?* By the *kadi?* By the American? That he had not been was evinced by the fact that the *basha* had not turned to pursue him. But pursuit would not be long in following; the riders, learning what had happened, would also be interested in the man in the ragged brown *djellab.*

The shouting increased, and the scurrying. Al-Lateef merged himself with the thickening stream of people, was about to turn his steps into a narrow side street when the entrance to it was suddenly blocked by people coming to see what the excitement was about. And at the same moment a soldier, dashing about in the crowd, seized him by the shoulder.

"You," cried the soldier, "must be the one! A charcoal seller. Yes—there is charcoal on your face! You are my prisoner!"

Al-Lateef, feeling ill, made protestations of innocence.

"I?" he asked, feigning surprise. "What have I done? I am naught but a poor muleteer who but now have delivered to the *sok* some bags of charcoal for the burner of charcoal, Ibn Sussi, of Anjera. Why do you seize me thus roughly? And what has taken place, that every one runs to and fro?"

As he addressed the soldier, Al-Lateef considered the possibility of escape. Or, to be more precise, he considered the lack of all possibility of escape. He could perhaps wrench free from the soldier, but he would not get five paces away before others would seize him—either other soldiers, or townspeople who, as is always the case, are ready to indulge in a man hunt, and willing to wait until afterward to find out why he may be hunted. Resistance would be worse than futile; it would be incriminatory. His only hope to escape from the danger into which his deed had gotten him lay in the use of his head. And at this moment Al-Lateef himself would not have given a Spanish peseta for that portion of his anatomy.

The red flame of anger had put it in pawn to the headsman.

Thus, his captor being reenforced by several other soldiers, Al-Lateef suffered himself to be led away to prison. On the way two events of some importance to him occurred. A man in whom he recognized a fast friend, stared at him and made a significant gesture. And he learned, from a remark made by one soldier to another, that even the death of the *khalifa* had caused the *basha* to stop only a moment in a hurried journey to Arzila to meet, and pay respect to, the Sultan's chief *vizier,* who was approaching Tangier.

He could, reflected Al-Lateef, get a new *khalifa* easily enough; but getting another *bashalik,* if the *vizier* should be-

come offended by lack of that respect to which his high office entitled him, was another matter. And Al-Lateef was thus relieved to know that this day and night at least must pass before the *basha* would have time to attend to the charcoal burner who was charged with the killing of the *khalifa*. And in a day and a night Allah may change many things.

BUT IN the day and night—and another day—that passed, Allah had not seen fit to change matters for the benefit of the man in the brown *djellab* who now sat in the darkness of the prison and cursed himself for being as one devoid of intelligence.

Al-Lateef spoke to Al-Lateef. Al-Lateef, the Subtle One, jibed at Al-Lateef the Unfortunate.

The words echoed thickly in the unrelieved, oppressive darkness of the stone prison of which, at the moment, Al-Lateef was the only occupant.

A match scraped along a slipper sole, flung the short bearded dark face of Al-Lateef into yellow being, touched the tip of an American cigaret, and meteored through the air to sizzle out on the flagstones with which the prison was paved. Only the occasional glow of the cigaret coal now brought the face out of the blackness about it, let it sink back into the darkness, so that it seemed to be throbbing between existence and obliteration.

Al-Lateef, this outburst over, spoke no more audibly. But in silent accents he accused himself of unreasonable error, charged himself with the even worse crime of being unable to devise a plan to avoid the consequences of that error. And those consequences, were he to have to face them, were unpleasant: a morning squad of inexpert riflemen who, at command, would shoot him to death in awkward, but finally effective, manner, after which his head would be cut off and stuck on a rusty iron hook over one of the city gates. And, without doubt, there were those who would promptly come and stand in the blazing sunlight beneath it and revile the glassy eyed relic of him whom they would now jibingly call "The Clever One".

But one thing was certain, and nothing could alter it. By midday of the morrow there would be no more Al-Lateef, unless there came to his active brain a way out of the difficulty in which he now found himself. This difficulty was not only a question of life against death, but of honor against dishonor—and it was the latter barrel of the gun which concerned him most. If he were to be shot in the morning, his young brother's life would be forfeited as well, and that younger brother would die, believing that he, Al-Lateef, had failed to keep his word of promise. That was why his brain seemed numbed by his present situation; why only empty words of self-rebuke whirled through his head and dropped from his tongue, instead of plans . . .

What particularly annoyed Al-Lateef was the fact that liberty was his for the taking. He had friends in Tangier, and those friends had not been idle. Scarcely had he been thrown, unrecognized, into prison, when a little gunny sack tent had sprung up under the hands of two rough looking countrymen—one of whom was the man who knew the secret passages of the *basha's* palace—in a ravine a score of yards behind the prison. In the protection afforded by that tent, a tunnel had been started. Eventually it had ended beneath a big flagstone in the corner of Al-Lateef's prison. With the coming of darkness on that day the prisoner had been startled to hear the voice of a friend, to have the hand of friendship laid upon his shoulder, to be told that the road of escape was open for his feet. But if he let his feet lead him to the safety thus offered? . .

If he did so, his brother would die.

If he did not, both of them would be killed.

And thus Al-Lateef, the Clever One, sent his friends away and remained to rage at the circumstances which had got him into this *impasse*. Was there no way

out? Was it not possible to devise a plan which would satisfy all the demands of the situation? For the hundredth time he made a mental list of the necessities of that situation.

Item: He must carry out the plans for his brother's rescue, and in order to do so he must be at liberty.

Item: But if he made escape from the prison, by the easy means at hand, it would be impossible for him to remain in Tangier, and hence impossible for him to rescue his brother. For such an escape would mark him as no ordinary charcoal burner—but as Al-Lateef and none other.

Item: It was necessary, absolutely, for him to remain in Tangier to effect that rescue—but he must be at liberty in order to do it.

Item: If he remained in prison he would be shot.

Item: If he were shot, his brother would also die.

In short, the occasion demanded the impossible, which is to say, it demanded that Al-Lateef remain safe and at liberty in Tangier, and at the same time have no hue and cry raised, no combing of the town by the *basha's* men for a guest missing from the stone prison.

And that in turn was to say, he reflected ruefully, that all he desired was that some kind person should come and open his prison doors and permit him to go about his brother's business, unmolested.

"I think," Al-Lateef told himself when the idea had thus been formulated, "that I am getting slightly mad."

And then he started all over again. His escape from prison, via the tunnel, would sign his brother's death warrant. As soon as he was found to be missing the town would be turned upside down. He had to stay in jail—and he had to get out of jail in order to rescue his brother.

And so his thoughts, there in the darkness, went round and round, round and round—until he was half hypnotized by the reiteration of the same ideas, the same phrases, as one may become so by watching the swinging of a clock's pendulum, or the breaking of waves on a sandy beach.

And then from some hidden place a little idea broke forth from the vicious circle and capered away. Startled, Al-Lateef gave chase, caught it, examined it, and breathed an exclamation. Could it be done? Was it possible? Or was his head so tired of trying to find a plan that he was now considering some utterly impossible, mad idea?

But after a quarter of an hour of silence, a sound came from his lips. It was a chuckle. Al-Lateef was Al-Lateef again. He arose and went to the flagstone in the northeastern corner. He cleaned the dirt from around its edges. He raised it, descended into the tunnel, lowered the stone into place again.

AN HOUR later the night guard on duty at the home of the *kadi* rose to greet a man who rode up to the gate. A single glance told him that the *kadi's* visitor was a person of importance, for the clothes he wore were excellent, and the horse he rode was a real horse. The guard made salaam.

"I desire speech with your master, the *kadi*, at once," said the guest and, to expedite matters, slipped a coin into the hand of the guard.

The request was not unusual in the guard's experience; people came at all hours of the day, and far into the night, to appeal to the judge.

"Come with me, *sidi*," he said, and Al-Lateef followed him into the walled grounds, and up a graveled path to the *kadi's* house.

In a small reception hall he waited while the guard went to the *kadi* and, upon his return, was ushered into the judge's presence.

The *kadi* was sitting crosslegged on a floor cushion, books piled about him, two huge candles in tall brass candlesticks standing guard beside him. He looked up as Al-Lateef entered, noted that his visitor wore the dress of a well-to-do citizen, raised his eyes to the face and was

impressed by the strength which showed in it. But no sign of recognition was revealed in his eyes, nor had Al-Lateef expected any: he was not, he felt certain, known to the venerable *kadi*.

Immediately following the usual greetings of brotherhood in Islam, and before the *kadi* could ask the identity of his visitor, Al-Lateef spoke.

"Your name, O *Kadi*," he said, "is known far and wide as that of one who eternally seeks to render justice. That is why I am here, in order that injustice may not be done. May I speak?"

"Speak," said the *kadi*. "Justice comes from Allah; injustice from Shaitan, the Evil One. Aye, speak."

"There is," then continued Al-Lateef, "a poor charcoal seller in the prison, concerning whom I have come to you, O *Kadi*. You must know of him."

"I know," assented the *kadi*. "He was seized for the killing of the *khalifa*. There —there seems to be no doubt of his guilt. I myself saw him coming from the scene of the crime—I and the *basha*, and another."

"But you did not see him strike the blow," offered Al-Lateef.

"No," assented the *kadi*. "No; I did not see him strike the blow . . . Do you mean that a mistake has been made? That the man in prison is innocent?"

"Of that," said Al-Lateef, "I shall let you be the judge, O *Kadi*. This is what I have come to tell you: the man who killed was dressed as a charcoal seller. He was disguised as a charcoal seller. He and the *khalifa* were ancient enemies. The *khalifa* rode him down, through carelessness. To that injury he added words of indignity. The pseudo charcoal seller dragged him from his horse and killed him. Then he made his escape. Thereupon the man who is in prison was seized and now faces death for the killing.

"He was seized because he was a charcoal seller, O *Kadi*—and you are aware that there are scores of them in the marketplace at all times . . . And thus I have come to you to have the prisoner set free, in order that injustice may not be done."

For the space of half a dozen breaths there was silence, while the *kadi* considered the face of his guest. Then he asked the question for which Al-Lateef had been waiting.

"How do you know of these things, *sidi*—and who are you?"

Instantly came the reply.

"I know of these things because I myself killed the *khalifa*, Ibn Mustapha Said. He was a dog of dogs, and my family's plight lies at his hands. When he rode me down, and added words of insult, even though he knew not who I was, I killed him—as I should have done long ago."

"The *khalifa* had many sins on his conscience," agreed the *kadi*, nodding. "For which he has now made explanation to the Most High. I would not have an innocent man punished for his killing. What is your name?"

"My name is Hassan Sanhajji," replied his visitor, with a straight look.

"Al-Lateef!" exclaimed the *kadi*.

"Al-Lateef—yes."

Again a brief silence, while the *kadi's* old blue eyes searched the face of the man of whom he had heard no little. Then:

"Hmph!" he grunted. "Hmph! Your name stamps your story with the hallmark of truth. It was a thing that Al-Lateef would do. The killing in the first place; this coming to me to clear an innocent man of unjust accusation. Hmph! And so you are Al-Lateef?"

"So men see fit to call me, *sidi*," agreed Al-Lateef. "Although—" he smiled— "sometimes I feel the title quite unmerited . . . And now, having confessed that I killed the *khalifa*, I have no doubt that you will free the poor fellow who is held for my act—and the *basha* may add a few dollars more to the reward he has already set for my head."

"You are a bold man, Sidi Hassan," said the *kadi*. "Bold indeed to come here, to me, the *kadi*, as you have. I do not know, perhaps you brought friends with you, to aid you in case I should order—"

"No, *sidi*—no," interrupted Al-Lateef. "I came alone. My cause was my only

protection. Nor was there, I think, any need of protection."

"You mean," exclaimed the *kadi*, "that I would listen to your admission of having killed the *khalifa*, and then permit you to go hence without interference!"

Al-Lateef bowed.

"Precisely that, O *Kadi*."

A little smile broke the porcelain skin about the *kadi's* lips.

"Oh, Al-Lateef! Oh, Al-Lateef!" he said. "Truly you are the Clever One. For you take advantage of your knowledge of the minds of honorable men. You were aware that because you came to me to prevent injustice, I should bid you go hence in peace. Well—go."

Al-Lateef bowed profoundly.

"It is true," he assented, "it is true, O *Kadi*, that I know the minds of honorable men. As I myself try to be. And that I foresaw what you would do. Nevertheless I am grateful to you. May the smiles of Allah rest constantly upon you. I go."

"Go with Allah," responded the *kadi*, and let his gaze follow Al-Lateef until the door had closed upon him.

Then he picked up a book and opened it. But he did not read. He sat staring at the page. Upon it he saw the smiling brown face of Al-Lateef.

JONATHAN BRAND, the American, drained his bedtime glass of the last of its amber whisky-and-soda, crushed out the light of a cigaret stub in an ash tray, rose from his easy chair and yawned. Then he walked to the door of his house, passed through it into the darkness for his nightly view of the glorious, low hanging African stars, to fill his lungs with the cool fragrant air drifting down from the hills, to let a little of that profound tranquility of a Moroccan night sink into his soul.

As he was about to pull his gaze away from the heavens and reenter his house, a horseman turned in at his gate and, apparently perceiving him by the light of the stars, called his name as he swung from the saddle.

"Who," asked Jonathan Brand pleasantly, "does me the honor?" He had no fear, as was attested by his unguarded gate: Jonathan Brand was known to the Moors as a friend.

Leading his horse by the bridle, his visitor drew near, and at last the American could see his face in the starshine.

"Al-Lateef!" he cried. "Yes—I am not mistaken. It is Al-Lateef." He held out his hand. Al-Lateef clasped it.

"Right, *sidi*," agreed the outlaw. "For long I have not seen you. You are well, my friend?"

"I am well, Al-Lateef," assented Brand. "Yes; it is a long time. Not since—since you aided me at—"

"Forget that, *sidi*, my friend," interrupted Al-Lateef. "It was nothing. No, I have not time to go into your house. I must do my business quickly, and go elsewhere."

"Is it wise," asked Brand, "for you to ride about Tangier thus? The *basha*—But I need not tell you that. He has returned from Arzila."

"I know, *sidi*," said Al-Lateef. "That is why I am here. This is my reason. Tomorrow he will have shot the poor fellow who is supposed to have killed the *khalifa*."

" 'Poor fellow,' " quoted Jonathan Brand. "Supposed to have killed the *khalifa*?"

"Because," explained Al-Lateef, "I killed the *khalifa*. I was disguised as a charcoal seller, the *khalifa* rode me down by accident, recognized me, and so—And I do not desire to see another shot for my action, nor to have the credit for killing that dog of a *khalifa*."

"Oh," said Brand slowly. "Oh, I see. Yes; the woman said it was a charcoal seller in a brown *djellab*. We passed one—the *basha* and the *kadi* and I—we passed such a one not far from the gates."

"That was I, *sidi*. I saw you. And then, the first charcoal seller wearing a brown *djellab*, who was come upon in the search, was seized, thrown into prison, adjudged guilty. As though there were not a dozen charcoal sellers in the market-

place; and as though all of them did not wear brown *djellaba*. The police are fools."

"And thus you risk your head in order that an innocent man may not be shot in the morning, eh?" asked Jonathan Brand.

"Let us say," suggested his companion, "that I do not wish another to have credit for ridding the world of a man who had already lived too long . . . I have seen the *kadi*."

"You have seen the *kadi*? You have told him this? And—and—"

"The *kadi* is an honorable man. He desires to see no injustice done. I saw him—and departed without interference. Having now told you of this matter—in order, of course, that you may bear witness to the other charcoal seller's innocence—I shall go to visit the third of those in whose hands the matter lies."

"The *basha*! You would actually—actually go to the *basha*?"

"Why not, *sidi*? Why not? The *basha* is only a man. And so, will you bear witness to the tale I have told you—to the *basha*, in the morning?"

"I will," agreed the American. "I shall tell him that you called upon me, confessed the killing, desired that the prisoner—"

"Tell him only, please, that I killed the *khalifa*—and that I trust his coffers are full enough to warrant his increasing the reward which he has offered for the head of Al-Lateef. Good night—and thanks."

He mounted and rode off. Jonathan Brand watched him until he was enwrapped by the night. Then he reentered his house. But he did not go immediately to his bed. He poured himself another drink; he lighted another cigaret; he sat down and stared for ten minutes intently at nothing. Then he smiled.

"Yes," he told himself. "Yes, I really believe he can get away with it. I wonder how he got out of prison. Friends probably—good things to have friends . . . Well, I'll see the *basha* early in the morning."

THE *BASHA* of Tangier occupied a palace, so-called, in the *kasbah* of the city, the walled portion of the old town, theoretically restricted to the residences of people of importance. The palace was not heavily guarded, because there was no need for a guard save for show. During the daytime three or four fancifully dressed soldiers were on duty at the gate, to hold the horses and perform obeisance to visitors and escort them to the *basha*. At night there was usually but a single sleepy guard, squatting on a bench beside a lantern within the gate, dreaming of such things as such a one dreams.

Al-Lateef's use of the iron knocker brought tonight's guard out of a dream of actually possessing five silver Spanish dollars all at the same time. He unbarred the smaller gate within the greater —the postern—lifted his lantern to scrutinize the face of the visitor, salaamed slightly at perception of the fine horse and the excellent dress of the man who stood there, and asked what service he could render.

"I desire immediate speech with your master, the *basha*," Al-Lateef told him, in that voice which is thrice a command. "I come, you may tell him, from Tetwan, bringing a word of danger which has arisen to his government. I wait here. Go."

He stepped through the gate. The guard closed it behind him, set the lantern upon the ground, slippered off. Quickly he returned, escorting a white robed man who covered his face with the folds of his *k'sa* in order not to be recognized by whoever was waiting to succeed him in audience with the *basha*. And when this visitor had stepped through the gate, the guard motioned to Al-Lateef, led him along the graveled walk which led from the gates to the palace.

"My master, the *basha*, is alone now," he volunteered. "He will receive you at once."

"That," said Al-Lateef, "is well."

He smiled grimly: it was well; he had expected to have to resort to some ex-

pedient to catch the *basha* alone, despite the fact that the hour was late.

The guard took him to a doorway, bowed, shuffled away. Al-Lateef flung back a curtain which took the place of a door, entered, saw the *basha* squatting on a great crimson silk floor cushion. He took three steps forward as the *basha's* fat face became distorted with surprise—and fear. Then, as the official's mouth opened to shout, Al-Lateef's hand moved swiftly; the mouth closed, and the *basha* stared at a pistol in his visitor's hand.

"You may call out if you desire, *sidi*," said Al-Lateef, quietly. "But assuredly you will finish the cry in hell. If one comes, send him away. And keep your hands where I can see them."

"What—what is the purpose of—your visit?" gasped the *basha*.

"To warn you," replied Al-Lateef."

"I—I shall withdraw the—the reward—for your head," began the *basha*. But Al-Lateef interrupted him.

"Let it stand, *sidi;* let it stand. It makes life interesting. And you may even desire to add to it—tomorrow. That, however, is not my business with you. Now give heed to the warning. It has come to my ears that some poor charcoal seller has been imprisoned by you for the killing of the *khalifa*, and that he is to be executed in the morning. You are a fool. No charcoal seller killed the *khalifa*. Where would a charcoal seller get the backbone to commit such an act? Hmph! Charcoal seller indeed! You are a fool. I killed your *khalifa*—I, Al-Lateef. In this manner.

"I was disguised as a charcoal seller. I was passing through the Place of the Three Gates. He rode me down, carelessly. He recognized me as I arose. Thereupon I pulled him from his horse and killed him. For he was an ancient enemy of mine—as you are speedily becoming, *sidi*—and I had the best of reasons for the deed."

"You!" exclaimed the *basha*. "It was you—in the brown *djellab*, with face and hands black with charcoal."

"I, *sidi*," agreed Al-Lateef. "I passed you—you and the *kadi* and a certain American. But you did not recognize me. And your soldiers must pick up the first charcoal seller they come across, clap him into prison, and you must order him shot out of hand. That is why I am here. Not that a charcoal seller more or less makes any difference—and the matter of justice is in the hands of Allah, not in mine—but I shall not permit such a one to have credit which belongs rightfully to me. I killed the *khalifa*, and I desire that this be made known, to my credit. As for the prisoner—hmph! Shoot him if you desire. Am I understood? Thoroughly?"

The *basha* nodded, cleared his throat, started to speak, stopped. But after another nod or two—

"I shall increase the reward for your head, if Allah does not permit you to kill me with that pistol."

"You are safe—for the present," said Al-Lateef. "If you behave yourself."

"And I shall not shoot the man in prison. He may be only a poor charcoal seller, but if I shoot him, and then it becomes known—as you will no doubt make it known—that he did not kill the *khalifa*, why, then whenever I ride into the country all the charcoal sellers in the Fahs, together with their sons and brothers and fathers and grandfathers will shoot at me from behind rocks. You shall have the credit for killing the *khalifa*—by way of an increased reward for your head."

"That," retorted Al-Lateef, "is as I desire it to be. We understand each other, then. Wherefore I shall now go away. But as I go, I shall be ready to return very speedily and shoot you—if you raise a clamor."

For a moment Al-Lateef considered another matter. The way things had gone, was it possible that he could now go ahead and, through his domination of the *basha*, accomplish the release of his brother without further delay? But he had to dismiss the idea. He would have to force the *basha* to go with him to the room where the brother was confined, to

open the door; then he would have to render the *basha* harmless, run the gauntlet of all the palace employees who might still be on duty.

No; it was not feasible. And his other plan was certain—or now seemed certain—of success. He stepped slowly backward, passed through the curtains, then kicked off his slippers so that the *basha* would not know whether he had gone or still stood beyond the curtains, and swiftly left the house. In two minutes more he was galloping down the cobbled road—and the *basha* was bawling lustily for everybody in the palace.

THE SUN of the following day was scarcely an hour above the pink and purple Anghera hills when soldiers came to the door of the prison, unlocked it and shouted for him to come forth.

Slowly the prisoner, who seemed to have been asleep, sat up, yawned, stared at the soldiers curiously. He arose, slippered toward the door, something like fear showing in his eyes.

"What—what do you want of me?" he asked. "Am I—am I to be shot?"

"Shot?" guffawed one of the soldiers. "Ho-ho! He thinks he is to be shot. Why didn't you say you didn't kill the *khalifa?* Here we thought you to be a dangerous fellow, a fellow who could drag an official from his horse and stick a knife through his windpipe—and you are nothing but a poor devil of a charcoal burner. Get out of here."

"I—I may go? Did I not say I didn't kill the *khalifa?* I may go? Yes, it is true I am only a poor—I go, *sidi,* I go! Do not kick me!" He was outside, blinking in the sunlight. "I am at liberty to—to secure more charcoal and sell it in the marketplace?"

"Do as you want, fellow," said a soldier, relocking the prison door and dropping the key into his bag. "Go and squat in the doorway of the *basha's* palace and peddle your charcoal, if so you desire."

"Oh, no—no!" objected the prisoner. "No, I should not do that. Just a spot here in the marketplace, where I may sit and sell my charcoal . . . And for whose act was I kept in this prison? I was hungry—there was no mat to sleep on—there were many fleas . . ."

"He who is known as Al-Lateef killed the *khalifa,*" a brown countryman informed him—a brown countryman who led a donkey laden with many bags of charcoal, and whose face and hands bore marks of his trade, and whose *djellab* was as brown and worn as was the prisoner's. "Already I have seen the *basha's* proclamation, posted on the gates. Al-Lateef killed the *khalifa,* and the reward for his head is greatly increased as a result of the killing."

"Oh," said the prisoner, "now I understand."

"Do you," asked the charcoal seller, "desire employment for the day? To sell my charcoal? I have other business—business concerning a garden belonging to my cousin's wife's daughter's husband. I shall pay you one real for each sack that you sell."

"Yes," said Al-Lateef. "Yes. One real for each sack? That is all right." He turned to the soldiers. "And I may sit where I will in the market, and not be disturbed? You will not again come and seize me by the neck?"

"For love of Allah, go where you will. It is nothing to anybody what you do, or where you do it. But begone."

Al-Lateef followed the charcoal burner.

An hour later Jonathan Brand, the American, rode slowly through the marketplace. He saw a small crowd engaged in reading and discussing a placard on one of the gates. He rode up to see it for himself. It was the *basha's* proclamation, offering greater reward for the head of Al-Lateef, slayer of the *khalifa,* in addition to his other sins.

As he was about to ride off, the crowd parted slightly. Through the opening Jonathan Brand saw a figure in a brown *djellab* seated alongside a pile of charcoal sacks, beneath the reward placard. He started. The charcoal burner looked him in the eye.

"Charcoal!" he cried. "Charcoal, *sidi*? Of excellent make, and very cheap, *sidi*. Charcoal!"

The American smiled and passed on. But following close upon his heels came a shabby fellow, his brown skin yellow with the dust of the inland trails, who vociferously urged onward a donkey laden with a pannier of firewood. Tied to the donkey's neck was a worn rope, and strangely, when the beast was immediately in front of the squatting Al-Lateef, the rope tightened, although the beast's master did not cease to urge it onward. Al-Lateef, at the sound of the voice, looked quickly at the donkey man, and a faint grin twisted his lips at the fellow's abjurations to his beast of burden.

"Onward, then, onward!" cried he who held the lead rope taut. "Think you we have weeks in which to reach our destination? By the name of Al-Lateef the Clever One, I tell you we must speed quickly. Aye, to the house of Hadj Abeeb, the merchant. Onward! mother of stubbornness, grandmother of a snail! Urrh!"

He cast a quick glance at Al-Lateef; Al-Lateef nodded, yawned; the donkey's lead rope loosened, and it surged forward through the crowd.

Wherefore within a quarter of an hour, Al-Lateef clasped the brown hand of the donkey driver in the house of Hadj Abeeb the merchant, and thereafter, over many cups of tea, the Clever One and the shabby fellow, who was the countryman of the gunny sack tent and possessor of the secrets of the *basha's* house, braided the rope which was to draw Al-Lateef's brother from the sea of danger.

THE COUNTRYMAN, protem, possessed a secret which he would have revealed to perhaps no other than his friend Al-Lateef. A builder, he had built the newer portion of the *basha's* palace for a predecessor of the present occupant. Wherefore he knew of certain secret entrances and passageways that even the present *basha* was quite ignorant of. And to these entrances he possessed keys, unwarrantably, of course, but nevertheless certainly. Which was why Al-Lateef had summoned him in haste.

With the arrival of a moonless midnight, Al-Lateef and Abdullah, the friend, approached a huge mass of oleander bushes growing by, and covering a considerable portion of the rear wall of the grounds of the *basha's* palace. The wall was ten feet high and fully as thick, and Al-Lateef now knew that concealed within it was a secret passageway. Abdullah pushed his way among the thick oleanders, Al-Lateef at his slipper heels, until he came to the wall, which was matted with a heavy vine. Abdullah hesitated, felt with his hands, then, drawing his curved knife from his belt, began to slash the vines. Al-Lateef assisted by pulling them away as they were cut. And in a few minutes an oblong had been cleared against the wall. In the starlight the keen eyes of Al-Lateef searched for indications of a door, but none were visible.

"Plastered over," said Abdullah, reading his thoughts. "Now the keyhole should be three feet from the ground, which is to say, about here."

With his knife he jabbed at the seemingly solid wall, chipping off little flakes of plaster. Then his knife struck metal; the next moment it slipped into the keyhole.

Swiftly now Abdullah took a handful of keys from his *shakarah;* tried one—another. The third fitted; grating, the somewhat rusty lock turned under pressure. And then Abdullah pulled sturdily against the heavy key, until plaster fell generously, and the door broke loose and swung outward. Abdullah stepped inside, Al-Lateef following. They closed the door, and then Al-Lateef drew from his *shakarah* a small electric torch and switched it on. Its pencil of light revealed the passageway.

"Come," said Abdullah. "This passage leads to the room which adjoins that wherein—if your information is correct—your brother is held captive. But

Allah only knows who may be in the room where the passage ends."

"Shortly," said Al-Lateef, harshly, "two others shall know. Lead you the way."

Silently as possible they traversed the passage, which was perhaps a hundred feet long before it turned; then fifty feet farther along a short stairway—and a door.

"This door," Abdullah whispered, "has no key. A secret spring operates the lock, and from either side. Now let us listen to see if the room is occupied."

Al-Lateef needed no such injunction; he heard Abdullah's words with one ear; the other, so to speak, was within the room . . .

Minutes passed, but to the ears of Al-Lateef and Abdullah, kneeling tense before the door, no sound came from the room; all was quiet as a lonely grave. At last Al-Lateef whispered:

"We are thus assured of but one thing: that no one moves or speaks in that room. But one, or many, may sleep there. That is a risk we must take." He drew a pistol from his belt. "Do you open the door now, Abdullah. Leave the occupants of the room, if any there be, to me."

But Abdullah laid a detaining hand upon the arm of the Clever One.

"Beyond a doubt, Al-Lateef," he whispered, "this door is covered by a hanging of some sort upon the inner side. I shall open it, as noiselessly as possible, then we shall see what we shall see."

Al-Lateef nodded. The fingers of Abdullah ran up and down the edge of the heavy stone portal, stopped, and there came an almost inaudible scraping as a hidden bolt slid in its socket. Then the door moved slowly toward them, was caught and held by Al-Lateef, who had extinguished his pocket torch as the fingers of Abdullah sought the secret spring. And although this left them in utter blackness, it was unrelieved by any shaft of light as the door swung open.

"See if there be a curtain," whispered Abdullah, and the brown hand of Al-Lateef reached through the opening, came in contact with that which Abdullah had prophesied would be found.

"*Aiwa*," said Al-Lateef, "it is as you said. Now let us listen again."

They did so, until they were satisfied that no sound was perceptible in the room. Then Al-Lateef thrust his pistol into his belt, seized a fold of the heavy curtain in his hand, and soundlessly slit it with his knife.

"No light," he said then, when the opening thus created remained as black as all the rest of the place. "No light in the room. Now I shall enter." He exchanged knife for pistol again, stopped, raised the curtain, and stepped into the room. Abdullah, disobeying orders, was on his heels. The door swung to behind them, but did not latch.

For a moment they stood thus, ears straining for sound, alert with every sense. Then Al-Lateef's lips sought the ear of his friend.

"Some one breathes," he warned. "Deeply. I shall use my torch; be prepared."

The pencil of light cut through the blackness. It raced across a wall, across the floor, and then—

"*Allah kerim!*" breathed Al-Lateef. The two stood petrified.

THE LITTLE yellow circle from the torch rested upon the huge maned head of a Numidian lion blinking his eyes in the surprise of the light, already starting to rise at the smell of humankind. And behind him stood his mate.

Al-Lateef and his friend had followed their secret pathway into the den of the lions which, in the morning, were to tear into pieces Al-Lateef's younger brother.

"The passageway, Abdullah," commanded Al-Lateef sharply, and turned to push his companion toward the door through which they had entered. Abdullah passed through it. "Wait," said Al-Lateef, and swung shut the door, a barrier between Abdullah and the lions.

Then, alone with the dread beasts, he turned to flash the light in their eyes,

knowing that the glare would hold them for a space.

For a moment only; already they were up, moving to evade the light in their eyes, beginning that circling motion which, in a few breaths would put one of them behind him for a deadly leap.

Swiftly Al-Lateef moved toward the iron barred door which was the entrance to the room, keeping the light jumping from one pair of eyes to the other. His heart pounded. His mind raced. What if he should lose the tremendous gamble he had just made? A battle with two lions in a closed room. One puny man against two sovereigns of the jungle, rendered ravenous by days of fasting in preparation for the unholy feast the *basha* planned to give them.

He might count upon killing one of them. But only by the direct aid of Allah the Merciful and Compassionate could he hope to kill both of them. And even though such a miracle were to be granted, the noise of the battle would bring the palace people on the run. He could escape through the secret door at which Abdullah waited, but his brother—his brother would die. There was but one thing to do, for he had staked his life and his brother's life upon a single throw.

If there was a key in the iron grated door, he would live. If not, he would die.

His back felt the touch of the door as he retreated, flashing the pencil of light from one pair of yellow eyes and snarling jaws to the other. One lion was in front of him; one almost in the corner at his left. His hand thrust backward, felt the iron grating, slipped between two bars and sought the key that he hoped to find in the outside of the lock. The lion in front of him raised his head, and from his great throat a roar began to issue.

The fingers of Al-Lateef closed upon the key, turned it; the door swung inward—the lion sprang—but Al-Lateef had the door between himself and the furious beast. It crashed shut, throwing him backward. But he retained his hold on the iron bars, felt his hand raked by a huge paw, turned the key in the lock, drew it out and thrust it into his belt. The lion growled, fell silent save for the swishing of an angry tail.

Al-Lateef threw his light down the hallway into which he had emerged from the room of death. It showed him a door in an adjoining room. It showed him also a key in that door.

Was that the room wherein his brother waited a terrible death?

The light sped on beyond.

And was that next room the one wherein slept the *basha* who had ordained that death?

Al-Lateef extinguished the light. He slipped his feet from his slippers. He went silently to the first door. He turned the key, opened the door, entered and closed it behind him. If his brother were here, well and good; he would lead him to freedom, or they would fight their way from the palace. But if, by chance, it was the *basha* who slept within—it should be the *basha's* last awakening.

Al-Lateef gripped his knife, crept forward, pressing the spring of his electric torch.

The light fell upon a couch, and upon the couch lay his brother.

The boy opened his eyes, blinked, stared with eyes of fear—until Al-Lateef whispered his name.

"And does the *basha* sleep in the next room?" asked Al-Lateef. The boy assented.

Al-Lateef stood for a moment in thought. Then he smiled grimly. And then swiftly he explained what was necessary, gave the needed commands. Aidomar, the brother, nodded, and touched the hand of Al-Lateef in love.

"Be ready, then, Aidomar," said Al-Lateef, "at the word. We must time ourselves by fractions of seconds. You understand?" The boy nodded.

Al-Lateef left the room, swept down the hall like a black ghost, came to the door of the next room. He knew now that here the *basha* slept. He raised his hand, his knuckles struck smartly against the wooden panel of the door.

"Who disturbs me?" growled an unpleasant, harsh voice.

"It is I, *sidi*, the master of the household," responded Al-Lateef. "Aidomar—the brother of that devil, Al-Lateef—has escaped."

Then followed the sound of swift motion and curses. Then Al-Lateef heard the sound of hands touching the door. He raced back to the lions' den, threw open the door, flashed the light in the animals' eyes. Swiftly they reacted to the taunt: here was that human back again—and they were hungry and vicious. They charged toward the doorway.

Al-Lateef turned and, scarcely three yards ahead of his pursuers, reached the door of his brother's room. He pressed it open. Even as he slipped through the protecting portals the light from his torch showed him the *basha* standing in the hallway, mouth open in sudden palsy of fear. He closed the door. The lions raced by, toward the new objective.

"Quick, now, Aidomar," cried Al-Lateef.

Again he flung open the door, again he came into the hallway, leading the boy. In the blackness behind them they left a pandemonium of sound—of snarls and shrieks and most unpleasant noises. They entered the lions' room, approached the secret door.

"Abdullah!" cried Al-Lateef. "Open, Abdullah!"

The secret door swung open.

Al-Lateef and his brother entered the dark passageway to freedom.

CONTRABAND FUR

By FRANK DUFRESNE

KALTAG LOUIE peered furtively about the dimly lighted trading post before producing a small canvas sack from his big sled bag and placing it on the rough counter. He thrust a bony paw into the sack, then paused.

"Say, Steinblower, you'll take 'em, won't you?"

The dark eyes of the fur trader behind the thick lenses of his glasses gave no hint of his thoughts.

"Produce your catch, Louie," he said quietly. "I'll buy anything I can turn a decent profit on. You know that."

Kaltag Louie opened wide the sack and dumped a pile of lustrous, golden throated furs on the counter.

"I got somethin', all right," he muttered thickly, looking behind him. "Marten! Forty o' the finest pelts ever brung into Nulena!"

"Marten, eh?" Steinblower riffled his fingers through the luxurious collection, then glanced quickly up into the shifty eyes of the trapper. "Thought you was opposed to an open season on marten, Louie. Didn't you refuse to sign the round robin circulated here last summer requesting the game commission to open up on them?"

"Yes, I did refuse, an' I'll keep on refusin'. Closed season keeps timid, law abidin' fools out'n the hills. Leaves a clear field fer a man with a little gumption an' courage."

"I see," said Steinblower slowly. "Sort o' put one over on the boys, eh? Now that you got your marten, what you figuring on doing with them?"

"Sell 'em, o' course; that is, if you've got guts enough to buy 'em. Ain't afraid of a little contraband fur, are you?"

"No. Ain't afraid of it, but you know what a risk I'd be running to handle—er—contraband. Supposing Game Warden Sam Black shows up and searches my place. Supposing the post office inspectors catch it going out in the mails. Supposing it's picked up by the customs officers at Ketchikan. Lot of risk handling closed season stuff."

"Oh, I know that old line," cut in Louie. "You fur dealers been peddlin' it to me fer years. O' course I don't expect to git full market value out'n the lot."

"You don't, eh?" Steinblower kneaded his palms together.

"No, I don't. Look them skins over again. Worth sixty dollars apiece if you can git 'em to the outside market. Give me twenty—take the lot."

The trader's hands trembled as he went over the catch, grading the pelts with the loving care of a connoisseur, exasperatingly slow about it. Kaltag Louie scanned the other's face anxiously, but the flash of the thick lenses revealed little. In pairs and trios Steinblower leisurely matched up the skins for tone shades and sizes. All the while he said nothing.

"Well, do you want 'em or not?" rasped Louie, unable to repress his anxiety. "Do you want 'em, or are you figurin' to squeal on me to the game warden? Hurry up an' make up your mind. Some one's liable to walk in on us."

As if in answer to Kaltag Louie's apprehensions came the grinding of a sled brake outside. Louie ran to the frost covered window and hastily scratched a place to peer out into the gathering dusk of midwinter afternoon.

"My Gawd, it's Sam Black, the game warden!" he called back hoarsely. "Ten dollars apiece fer the bunch. Git 'em out o' sight!"

Steinblower peeled off four one hundred dollar bills from a roll and passed them over to Kaltag Louie's greedily clutching fingers. Silently he swept the marten skins into the canvas sack, and tossed it carelessly under the counter just as the game warden strode into the store.

"Why, hello, Louie!" boomed the game warden, gripping the hand of the smaller man. "I've been looking for you. Did Steinblower tell you?"

"Er—no—" Kaltag Louie tried to appear unconcerned. "Wh-what did you want?"

"Sit down. I'll soon tell you."

Sam Black's heavy hand rested like a cold steel weight on Louie's shrinking shoulder. His nerves jumped so he hardly heard the words that followed:

"Missed you on my down trip last week," the game warden was saying. "Told all the other boys, and left word with Steinblower, here, to notify you that the season on marten was opened beginning middle of last month."

The GENERAL

A Story of the Irish Rebellion

By R. V. GERY

A LITTLE man strolled by an Irish river, looking at the duns hatching on the water. Occasionally he cast expertly over a rising fish with a worn old greenheart rod, and now and again swore with precision and effect when a trout rose short or was pricked and fled down the stickles. He carried a wicker creel slung over his shoulders, wore a battered tweed cap adorned with dozens of sad colored flies, and puffed at a short black briar with obvious enjoyment. You might have taken him for a country lawyer from Kyleranny four miles away, or the dispensary doctor out for a rare afternoon's holiday.

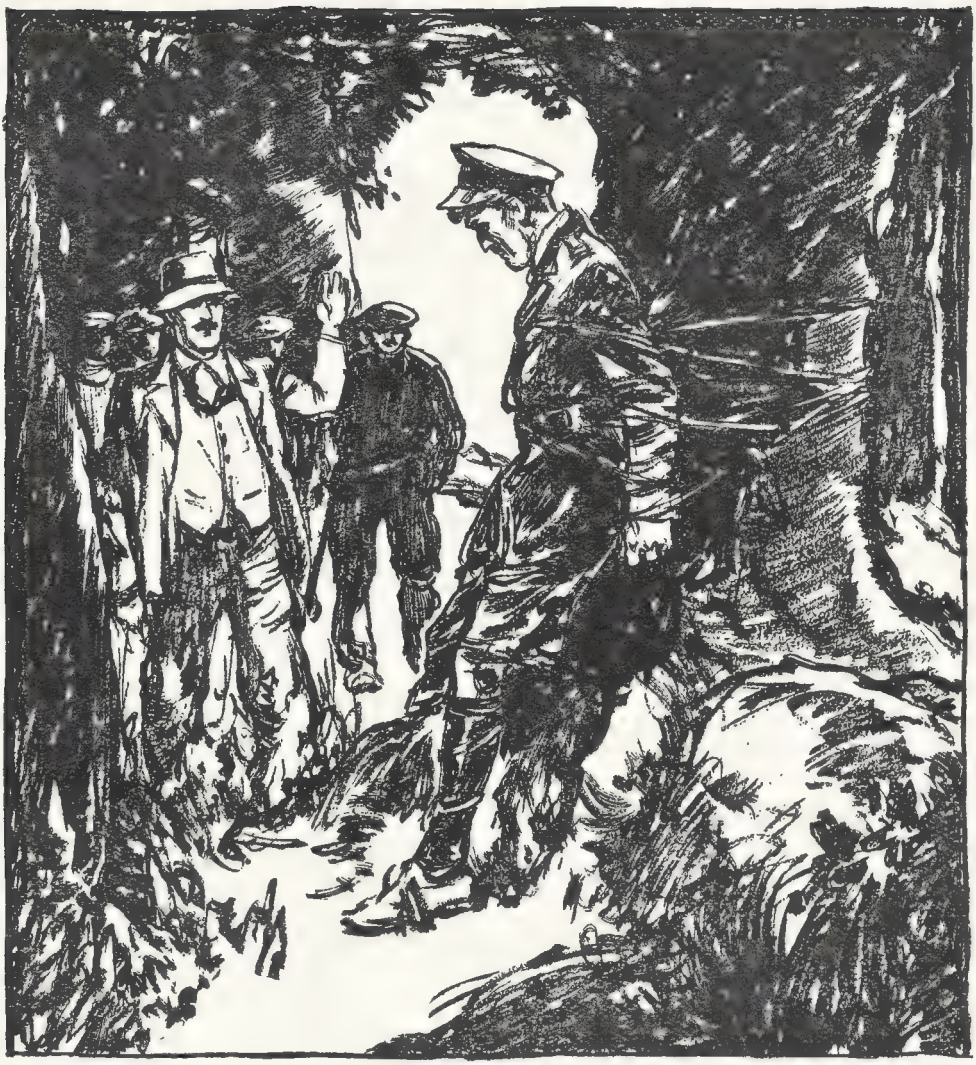
He was stocky and thickset, with a high head on a bull's neck, florid clean shaven jaws that protruded a little, like a pike's, a pair of twinkling eyes of a peculiar shade of gunmetal blue, and a scrubby black mustache. His name was John Kelly, and in private life—so to speak—he was the Kyleranny publican; but since in Ireland in those days of 1920 dual personalities were almost more the rule than the exception, he was, in a kind of semi-incognito, perhaps the most wanted man in four baronies. As a matter of fact, he was a general in the Irish Republican army. He was just this side of forty.

He walked by the singing river this May evening, flicking idly at the trout and admiring the sunset behind the row of peaks that fringed the western horizon, swimming purple flushed against the sky of Ireland's incredibly tender blue. The stream ran fast over its bars and shallows, between low and barren foothills, the spurs of a block of heathery upland known locally as the Mountain.

Probably the block covered ten square miles of country, rocky, full of bogholes and little patches of snipe marsh, the fountainhead of three or four small rivers like this one, and in peace time carrying a great warrant for grouse. Just now, however, it had put off its normal character and retreated to a mysterious distance, since it was whispered that there were more things in that mountain block than grouse and stills of *potcheen*, and frequenters other than "them people", the fairies.

There were folk in Kyleranny who knew, or affected to know, that the Mountain gave refuge to more than one of the "boys", on the run from the attentions of the constabulary or the troops of occupation. John Kelly was one of these folk; but the oysters out in Kyleranny Bay were no more mute than he.

Only, District Inspector Quin's stout, green clad constables, and Colonel Gogarty's tall troopers of the Ragpickers had combed the Mountain, weary day and weary night, for months without flushing anything more suspicious than the grouse or doing more than break the dreaming peace of the heather. So that the D.I.



tugging at his mustache in vexation, opined to Colonel Gogarty that "there wasn't a policeman sneezed, nor a soldier bitted a horse in Kyleranny but what 'twas known in the Mountain in ten minutes." Quin, like Gogarty himself, was an Irishman, and was finding official duties come hard on him.

Meanwhile John Kelly preserved a massive silence, and kept most studiously on the right side of the law and of its executives. Quin and Gogarty knew full well that the short man stood high in the councils of Sinn Fein; and Kelly himself twinkled inscrutably as he heard their search parties ride past at night. But outwardly there was little to show, even to a careful observer, that these three were enemies, or that Kyleranny was looked at askance by Dublin Castle as a lurking ground for revolt. Ireland was like that ten years ago; a gigantic conspiracy of silence.

Behind Kelly, as he strolled by the

river, Mickleen O'Callaghan and Bat Mooney — dark haired, blue chinned young men—crouched under a limestone boulder, with between them a very well kept Lee-Enfield that had seen service on the Somme. Whatever patched up truce might be in existence, kidnapping was not in his self-imposed program for John Kelly; he went unobtrusively guarded on these little expeditions of his.

The sun dropped lower and lower over the distant hills. The valley was deserted, except for curlews, and on the walled road paralleling the river and leading into the Mountain's airy fastnesses, a tiny cartload of peat sods, drawn steadily uphill, with a vociferous urchin, barefoot, beating the ass as a sort of prescribed ritual. Kelly watched it for a couple of minutes, thoughtfully running his line through his fingers; and on the hillside above him Mickleen nudged his companion.

"Be cripes, Bat," he whispered. "Stole away. The young lad has them beat!"

Mooney grinned sourly.

"True for you," he said. "An' mebbe now we'll teach the murderin' English scuts what side the bread's buttered!" He patted the rifle at his side affectionately. "Them's the little fellas," he said under his breath.

THE HUM of an engine grew suddenly on the twilight, and a car swung up the road. It stopped opposite to where Kelly was once more whipping the river, and a man got out. Bat Mooney gave a queer clucking gasp in his throat, and snatched at the rifle, for the man was alone, and in the khaki service dress of the English army. Mickleen grabbed at him.

"Will ye have a care, now?" he advised. "The time's not yet—"

Bat cursed violently.

"The damn Dublin Englishman!" he said. "Them's the boys comes down here to raise throuble, the way a decent lad in th' I.R.A. 'll be dhragged up an' hanged for somethin' he knew no more about than a fly. The dhirty spyin' sneak! For why won't they let us alone?"

The man leaped over the low stone wall at the roadside, and advanced on Kelly. The lines deepened momentarily on the little Irishman's face, and he shot a swift glance up the mountain road, where the urchin and his ass cart had now vanished into the dusk. Then he grinned and walked to meet the newcomer, rod in hand.

"Good evenin' to ye, Captain," he said, in a clipped, staccato brogue. "I'm not after havin' the pleasure of makin' your acquaintance before, but I've heard a lot of ye already." He held out his hand, and the other refused it.

"You're John Kelly, aren't you?" he asked rudely. "Well, I'm Captain Gunter of Intelligence, Kelly, and I'd like you to know right away that I'm here to put a crimp in these little Sinn Fein games of yours. Things have been too damned slack hereabouts for long enough, and it's going to stop. You understand?"

Kelly regarded him soberly.

"Ye've the advantage of me, Captain," he said in a level voice, "for I'm not clear in me mind what it is ye're referrin' to."

Gunter lighted a cigaret.

"Oh, yes, you are, Kelly," he said, through the flame of his match. He had a trick of flashing out a quick look that was not prepossessing, and the light showed up his dark, insolent eyes. "I've heard all about you!"

Kelly chuckled.

"Faith, I'll wager 'twas nothin' good then, Captain," he said. "They have me that persecuted with their chat ye'd believe the Ould One himself was me own brother. But there," he went on pityingly, "what's talk? *Arrah*, I'll go bail ye've suffered that way yerself, Captain."

"Maybe—" Gunter put his head on one side and his hands in his pockets, surveying Kelly with an uncompromising stare. "I'm expecting to have them talk about me a deal more by the time I'm finished, at that."

Kelly took his pipe from between his teeth.

"Ah, come now," he said. "They're not that bad hereabouts, Captain!"

Gunter suddenly shifted his gaze to the distant peaks.

"How bad are they, Kelly?" he asked. "You ought to know."

The little man considered him as one fencer estimates another before they engage.

"You'll be from the Castle, Captain," he said in the silkiest of tones. "About here we're liable to leave Dublin to answer its own questions—particularly them kind of questions."

"Well, I'm just giving you fair warning, my friend. I'm not going to have any damned Shinner playing tricks when I'm about—or being insolent, either," said Gunter nastily. "You'll find yourself under arrest a lot sooner than you expect, if that's your line."

The general turned back to the river.

"Fair warnin', Captain," he said with the suspicion of amusement in his voice. "An' I'll remember it. An' now," he went on, "savin' your presence, I'll be tryin' can I catch another trout or so, for me supper. Ye don't fish, Captain?"

Gunter looked at his back for a minute, and made no reply. He was not in any way used to this airy banter, and he felt his gorge rising; this was not the manner in which he had been treated in the Intelligence section in Dublin. Very far from it.

He made to say something further, thought better of it, and left Kelly methodically whipping his pool. A minute later his car swung on the road, its lamps throwing yellow avenues in front of it, and roared back to Kyleranny and the Ragpickers' barracks there.

General John Kelly laughed, a little bitterly.

A hundred yards away, behind the limestone boulder, Bat Mooney laid down the rifle with regret.

"That the devil may crack the two legs under him!" he apostrophized. "If 'twasn't for John Kelly there that's been blindin' me aim this ten minutes, I'd try could I put a bullet in the damn long English guts of him, light or no light—the spyin', crawlin' fox! I'd down him, like a bird out of the sky!"

"Ah, gwan out o' that." Mickleen was more peacefully inclined. "He's doin' no manner of harm to John Kelly this minute, nor any one else. He's down here to shtir up trouble—an' by damn, let him start it! He'll sup enough of it. Time enough for the shootin' then, Bat."

Mooney scowled, caressing the rifle.

"It's what I wish," he asseverated.

"Howld your noise—" Mickleen pointed to the river bank. Kelly had spiked his rod in the grass, and was walking toward them.

"For what'd ye want to be dancin' up an' down so, ye big *bosthoons?*" he asked angrily. "Three times I saw ye plain, while I was speakin' to himself."

Bat broke into a torrent of muttered curses, addressed to Captain Gunter, and mainly concerned with that officer's future state. Kelly took him by the arm.

"Listen here to me, Bartholomew Mooney," he said sharply. "There's to be no shootin' in Kyleranny but what I give the word. Understand that well, now! Did I not see ye offerin' to drill this Gunter man? Would ye have the whole nest of them out after us, an' we with the rifles—" he dropped his voice—"ye know how. Three parts soft, ye are, Bat Mooney, an' the rest's not sensible. Get home with ye now, the two of ye; there will be no more work tonight."

The two men slipped away in the dark, Mooney still cursing to himself, and Kelly stood in the road a moment, looking after them. Then he turned upstream again, toward the dark bulk of the Mountain. A fox barked suddenly in the gloom.

The general stopped, waiting. A moment later the fox barked once more, and then again. John Kelly struck a match, held it for a second in cupped hands and sat down at the roadside.

Three minutes passed, and a figure materialized itself out of nowhere at his side.

"There's nineteen rifles," it murmured, "an' four hundhred rounds of ball cartridge . . ."

It passed into the night as silently as it had come. Kelly unspiked his rod and turned homeward, creel on shoulder.

COLONEL GOGARTY of the Ragpickers, that famous regiment of English cavalry quartered in Kyleranny town, stood in his office talking with his fiery and abrupt little major, Dennistoun.

There was a cloud on the good colonel's brow, and every inch of his great height expressed perturbation and annoyance. Command of the Ragpickers, the culminating honor of a lifetime's service, was not, he found, a very enlivening task just now; for Gogarty was an Irishman, and duty and inclination waged stern and frequent war in his breast in these troublous times. Indeed, it was freely enough rumored that inclination often enough won:

"Ah, God help him, the poor fella, is it him that'd be settin' the sodgers on our lads? No, but it's the high up ones that have him desthroyed, in the way of duty!"

Thus Kyleranny: an opinion flattering to Gogarty as a humanitarian, but not in the least gratifying to the authorities at Dublin Castle just then.

Hence, directly, Captain Gunter.

"Get down there and put some ginger into old Gogarty," had been the gist of the formally worded instructions that had sent him to Kyleranny ten days before; and loyally had the captain gone about his task. Already a curfew hour had been fixed for the town; pickets of slightly sulky Ragpickers—for in the matter of keeping the peace the colonel's view was theirs—made nightly patrol of the streets; Inspector Quin and his "polis" conducted spectacular and highly unfruitful raids; and, last straw of all, John Kelly's own comfortable bar in the Kyleranny Hotel had been formally put out of bounds to all ranks.

The Ragpickers liked John Kelly, and it is on record that Kelly himself was not averse to a jest with the tall, wide striding troopers. Which was, in a sense, why, in ten months of storm, the district had seen neither ambush nor waylaying, murder, nor burned farms. It was an oasis of peace, and unfortunately the high up ones on both sides had perceived it; which was again why, among other things, John Kelly had so anxiously observed a certain ass cart on the mountain road, and why Gogarty stood talking to Dennistoun in the office, his subject being Captain Gunter of Intelligence.

"He's an impossible young squirt," the colonel said. "And he'll have the devil's own delight loose here in a month at this rate. His latest game is to go out alone in that highpower Sunbeam of his, and bully the unoffending potwallopers all round the country. Says it's throwing the fear of God into them."

Dennistoun, a dark, dapper Englishman, nodded.

"He'll certainly run into something," he agreed. "You can't tell him anything, I suppose, sir—one never can, with these staff pups. I remember Gunter overseas, too; he was on the provost-marshal's staff in 1918, and knew everything."

Gogarty shook his head.

"My instructions are to 'give him every facility,' " he said, "and you know what that means."

Major Dennistoun did, and he was also aware that the colonel's tactics of pacification were not popular up top. And since he was what he was, and had no desire to succeed his colonel unexpectedly in the command of the regiment, he discovered himself being profoundly sorry for his big senior.

"Well," he said, "let's take it as it comes, sir. Maybe he'll go too far and get taught something."

"I doubt it," said Gogarty gloomily. "Things don't happen like that in this imperfect world."

There was the roar of the Sunbeam's engines outside, and Gunter entered, saluting with precision and a flick that might have meant nothing at all.

"Well, Colonel," he began, "I've just seen your celebrated John Kelly. He seems to be rather a twopenny kind of a ruffian. I'll soon cook his little goose."

Gogarty sighed.

"I suppose so," he said. "But there are far worse people, Gunter. Yes, I know you've been sent down here to get things moving—stamp Sinn Fein out, and all the rest of it; and somehow, I think it's a pity. You don't know this area, any more than Dublin does. The boys are straight and quiet enough here—at least that's my experience of them—and if there's one man who's kept them steady and out of trouble it's John Kelly. I'm not exaggerating when I say he's done more than the Ragpickers and the police put together. Why not let him alone?"

"I don't agree at all, sir." Gunter's voice was harsh. "You'll never get anywhere with this lot until you show them who's who. Put 'em down and keep 'em down. It's all they understand—force. Otherwise—" he shrugged—"they'll laugh at you. I'm very sorry about Kelly; it's rather a pity he's a friend of yours."

There was a subtle edge of insolence in the last sentence, but Gogarty affected not to notice it.

"Yes," he said quietly. "I believe John Kelly is a friend of mine. Of course, he's a general or something in the I.R.A. and that's where his sympathies really are. But—we've had no murders here, nor shootings from behind the hedge; and I know who's responsible for that. I'll give him that much credit, and it's a deal."

Gunter smiled unpleasantly.

"No doubt, sir. The only thing that worries me is what else he's responsible for. This district is much too quiet to please me."

Again there was the note of impertinence, and the colonel bridled.

"So I hear," he said. "Well, it's your job, of course, Gunter, and my instructions are to assist you in every way—which means, if you say so, that we'll turn the Ragpickers out for you and start in the house-to-house search, arrest-on-suspicion business. But I can't say it's a job I like."

"I imagine not, sir." Gunter grinned with intention. "It can't be pleasant raiding one's—er, friends. Still, I may have to ask you to do it."

"Very well." Gogarty's easy temper was growing short. "We'll not discuss it further, Gunter, until it arises. I take it you'll see Quin of the police and put your—ah, views before him as well."

"Oh—the police . . ." Gunter curled his lip. "No, I don't think we'll trouble the police, sir. Somehow, I've no particular use for them just now. For one thing, they're Irishmen. And for another, they've been shot over a deal too much elsewhere to make them over-anxious to stir up trouble here. In short, sir, the police have got the wind up, and I'm not using them if I can help it."

Gogarty got up.

"You know, Gunter," he said, "I think you've the wrong outlook on this business altogether. I suppose you'll be insinuating next that Quin and I are working with John Kelly against you. No—don't interrupt, please. That's what it looks like to me. You may be from Dublin, and with orders to liven things up here; but that doesn't excuse you for making assertions about the Irish—either side—for which you've no shadow of evidence. And I'd be glad if you'd remember this in future, Gunter."

He turned on his heel and strode out of the office. For all his easy going, complacent nature, Colonel Gogarty of the Ragpickers was no person to cross.

Gunter glanced after him with an amused smile.

"I seem to have got under the Old Man's skin," he said. "Well, it's about time some one did!"

Dennistoun, sitting at the table, looked at him without a word, and his tight little mouth hardened under the neat black mustache. Then he went on writing.

BE PLEASED to consider Bat Mooney—the bitter tongued young man who had once already that night fumbled at his rifle with fingers itching to send a bullet through Captain Gunter of Intelligence. Back in Kyleranny, in the rear of Clancy's

(High Class Provisions—Licensed to sell Beer, Spirits and Tobacco) he sat with his chin in his hands, a thick tumbler of porter at his elbow, and black night in his heart. Clancy's met his mood; a dark and grimy establishment in a side street, much haunted by furtive gentlemen who might, no doubt, have told you a great deal about the Mountain and its mysteries, and zealously raided by Quin's "polis" once a month or so; provided in consequence with ingenious bolt holes out of which its customers gracefully faded at sight of the dark green uniforms at the door.

Here Bat foregathered with the elusive gentlemen aforesaid, and talked below his breath. It was treason they talked—these black haired, blue chinned young men—the kind of treason Emmett's men talked, and Wolfe Tone's so long ago; the sour, half comprehended enmity toward England breaking out in threats and mouthings, explosive stuff that a spark might easily enough ignite into a wild flare of revolt. Bat had in him the Irishman's tortured soul—the romantic affair that makes of every slight a grievance and every grievance a crusade. Maybe Gogarty might have understood him, or little Quin of the police; but not the Gunters of this world. Not by the breadth of a universe.

And so, conversely, with Bat. To him Gogarty was mud and Quin was mud, as wearing the accursed uniform and doing the work of the unspeakable thing; but they were at least Irish mud, and to be given the benefit of some consideration. But Gunter, the Englishman—be sure enough that Kyleranny had known all about him ten minutes after he entered the barracks—Gunter! Bat's stomach turned sick and acid at the thought of him.

Half a dozen other men were in the back room that night, smoking and talking in undertones. The successful piece of gun running was never once mentioned; but every man in the room knew of it and rejoiced at the coup. Up in the Mountain now the rifles and ammunition would have been hidden so that, as Colonel Gogarty had said, it would take a regiment a month to find them; and their possession altered the face of things for the Kyleranny "boys". This meant business at last, after all the talk.

If, thought Bat, chewing savagely on a finger nail, it was allowed to mean business. John Kelly's warning to him that evening rankled; more so, because Bat knew well enough that Kelly meant what he said and had enough of a following in Kyleranny to be able to enforce his ideas. There would indeed be no shooting until he gave the word. The question was, would he give it? Bat doubted it. There were others who doubted it, as well, for the talk had already swung to the general.

"Did ye see John Kelly this evenin'?" one of the men asked another.

"I did. Not an hour back, an' him comin' home from fishin'."

A silence.

"The same John Kelly," a hoarse voice proclaimed, "is apt to sup trouble—"

"An' why for?"—another voice.

"Runnin' with the hare an' huntin' with the hounds, no less—that's why for, me boyo!"

"An' that's true for you." Bat woke from his moody glaring into infinity. "Wasn't it meself see him tonight conversin' so pleasant as you please—" he spat—"with that damn long, lyin', spyin' thief of an Englishman? A fine spoortin' fella for a general is John Kelly—an' him offerin' to shake hands with the dirty scut! Ach!"

A growl of approval ran round the room. Any competent observer would have recognized the signs of that condition long known to the Irish constabulary as out of hand. The air tingled with electricity.

A sudden scuffle in the outer shop interrupted the murmurings, and one Timsy Sullivan, owner-driver of Kyleranny's one and only taxicab—a wheezy flivver—thrust his long face into the door.

"Boys," he whispered with dramatic intensity, "did ye hear the news?"

Half a dozen startled faces confronted him, for, like Macbeth's, Timsy's face was as a book wherein a man might read

strange matters. His eyes were popping half out of his head.

"The little fella that's afther landin' the rifles, God save him, on Mara strand—the sailors in a torpedo boat, or whatever 'tis they call 'em, took him awhile ago. An' him with papers on him."

Bat Mooney sprang to his feet.

"The *omadhaun!*" he swore. "An' it'll be in the barracks by now, bad cess to it, an' the boys in the Mountain with the arrms not yet dug in."

"What'll we do, Bat?" some one asked. Mooney thought a moment; he was faced with a crisis.

"Listen to me now," he said. "Them lads in the barracks'll be out an' afther us before morning: How'd it be—" he dropped his voice—"if we—that's us and the boys in the Mountain—put a trap in the road for them, same as others? It's past time for a piece of trouble here, I'm thinkin'." He looked round the room, his eyes alive with light. "Who's with me?" he said.

"An' John Kelly?"—from a couple of voices.

"Let you forget John Kelly! It's equal to us what John Kelly thinks. John Kelly's a thraitor, if ye ask me. Is there anny one wid me, again? You, Timsy, your car's commandeered to dhrive us up into the Mountain. Come on, boys!"

There was a trample of feet, and Clancy's back parlor was emptied into the night. Clancy put the shutters up and the lights out. He recognized the signs well enough.

ONE of the indications of Captain Gunter's efficiency had been the installation in Kyleranny barracks of a field wireless set: "So that," as the captain observed with sarcasm, "we'll be able to get information in here without every corner boy outside the telegraph office taking a squint at it first." The outfit had been busy during the short period of Gunter's attachment to the Ragpickers, and the two operators had had their hands full with code messages.

At a little after midnight there came a tap at the door of Gunter's quarters, and the night duty man stood outside.

"Message, sir—" He handed a form to the tousled haired captain.

Gunter took it with a grunt, unlocked a safe and proceeded to decode the mysterious looking groups of letters. Ten minutes later he was knocking at the colonel's door.

"You see, sir?" he said.

The message ran:

DESTROYER SHARK REPORTS CARGO ARMS DEFINITELY LANDED MARA DUSK TONIGHT. TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS AND REPORT

The colonel swore deeply.

"The damned fools!" he said.

"So it's come to it at last. I'm sorry, Gunter. You were right."

"So it appears, Colonel," said Gunter readily. "In the meantime, we've to consider what's to be done."

Gogarty flung out a hand.

"Turn the regiment out," he said. "Notify Quin—you'll have to do that, of course. And, I suppose, spend the rest of a week combing the Mountain and having farmers out of bed at midnight. Damn the fools! But it's the first time, Gunter. I'll stake my commission on that."

"Maybe, sir." Gunter's voice was noncommittal. "But I don't think I'd turn the regiment and the police out at once."

The colonel stared at him.

"Why?" he asked.

Gunter permitted himself a superior smile.

"If you'd been chasing rebels as long as I have, sir," he said, "you wouldn't ask the question. The chances are these devils don't know they've been given away. The first thing to do is to get some idea of where they've hidden the arms—in the Mountain, of course; and it's a one-man show. I'm going to take the car and go up to look round."

Gogarty frowned.

"You can't do that," he said. "You don't know the district."

"Doesn't matter," said Gunter. "Nor do your fellows, after dark. It's a one-

man show, sir, and I'm the man for it. I'll run up the road, and the chances are I'll spot some activity. I'm used to this sort of thing."

The colonel sent for Dennistoun, and the major appeared, in a neat suit of pajamas. Gogarty explained the Intelligence captain's idea.

"What d'you think, Dennistoun?" he asked.

His second-in-command meditated. Finally he nodded.

"I'm in favor of it, sir," he said. "We'd better have the squadron stand by though —just in case."

Gunter laughed.

"I won't need the squadron, gentlemen," he said, and went off to prepare for his journey.

Gogarty looked at Dennistoun, and that officer winked, once and slowly.

"I don't quite know how it'll turn out, but"—he began.

"I don't like it, Dennistoun—" Gogarty spoke in a worried voice. "The young fool'll get himself into a mess."

"Nonsense, sir," said Dennistoun. "He may get the devil of a hiding from the boys, but they'll not harm him; and we'll have him out of it by breakfast. Besides," he said, "if you'll allow me, I'm going to pay a little visit, just as soon as Gunter's out of sight."

"Who to?" inquired the colonel.

"I think," said Dennistoun, "I'll go down and have a little talk with John Kelly."

Twenty minutes later Gunter swung out of the barrack yard at the wheel of his car. He was in tweeds, and carried an automatic in his pocket; and as he went, the grave notes of a trumpet split the night, and there followed the trampling of feet and hoarse orders. The Ragpickers were getting under arms. Gunter smiled again as he drove.

ONE O'CLOCK was striking from the church tower in Kyleranny as Gogarty's car drew up at the curb in front of John Kelly's hotel. Its windows were blank and empty, and the surrounding streets quiet as the grave; evidently Kyleranny was either innocent or gone to ground from perturbation.

Dennistoun got out and proceeded to thunder on the door.

"This'll have him out," he said, "if he's here."

But John Kelly was sleeping with an easy conscience, it appeared, and a few minutes assault on the panels brought him to an upper window. He threw it open and stuck his head out, in a wonderful nightcap.

"Who's there, bedad?" he asked.

"Colonel Gogarty, John. It's all right. Come down a minute. I want a chat with you."

"Well, be the powers, ye choose a queer time to be payin' calls, Colonel." Kelly's voice had in it more than a spice of amusement. "Hold on where ye are. I'll be with ye just now."

Gogarty and Dennistoun waited in the street. It was certain, of course, that Kelly knew all about the running of arms, though whether he would have heard of the *Shark's* capture or not was more doubtful. Probably not, from the very fact of his being thus innocently abed. The two men conversed in low tones, until they were interrupted by the arrival of Kelly, fully dressed, at his door.

"Will you come inside, gintlemen?" he asked with nimble hospitality. "It's late, but maybe—" he twinkled— "we can find a little somethin' to keep out the cold."

"No, we'll not come in, John." Gogarty eyed Kelly standing on the doorstep. "What's all this I hear about a cargo of arms?"

Kelly's face would have made the fortune of a poker player.

"Cargo of arms, Colonel?" he replied with studied blankness. "Sure, yourselves know more about it than me. Or perhaps if ye asked Captain Gunter—that's the lad that knows everything, so I've heard."

"Listen here—" the colonel's voice took on something of its parade rasp— "there's

enough of this business, Kelly. You ran a cargo last night, and the man that landed it is a prisoner now on one of the destroyers outside. I suppose the rifles are up in the Mountain by now; but you know what it all means, I've no doubt. I'm having the regiment out at once and, unless you and I can manage to come to some reasonable arrangement, you'll have Kyleranny like other places. D'you want that, John? I don't."

The twinkle in Kelly's eye snuffed out suddenly.

"Nor me, Colonel," he confessed soberly. "But with fine gintlemen of the spit of Captain Gunter paradin' the counthry, what else would ye expect?"

Dennistoun cut in:

"And that's another thing, John. The captain's away in to the Mountain tonight—after the arms."

Kelly jumped as if he had been shot.

"What's that you're sayin', Major?" he asked anxiously. "Has that little fella gone up there alone this night?"

Dennistoun nodded, and Kelly swore violently.

"Here's what comes," he broke out, "of Dublin interferin' with things they know nothin' about! I've been in dread o' this since the day they sent the little pup down here. "An' now," he went on bitterly, "I suppose yourself and the polis'll have the men out, an' be raisin' tandem an' tallywhack with the whole barony. Screechin' at night, an' draggin' decent men from their beds, an' shootin' boys that are innocent as the day itself. Ah, why can they not let us alone?"

The little man was genuinely upset, and Gogarty was more than half inclined to sympathize. John Kelly, he knew, had risked much to keep Kyleranny out of affairs of this sort. Still, there was Gunter to be considered.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you mean that some of your beauties have collared him. I needn't tell you, John, that if any harm comes to him you'll have reprisals. Dublin won't let a thing like that rest. And then, besides, there's this business of the rifles."

Kelly scratched his chin thoughtfully as he stood in the dark street.

"Listen to me, Colonel," he said. "You an' me know one another be now, an' I b'lieve one of us is as anxious as the other to steer clear of trouble hereabouts. True for you, there's a little matter of a few rifles; but there's a way out of that, maybe. I'll strike a bargain with ye. Gunter's in the Mountain by this, I've no sort of doubt, an' some o' them lads up there are apt to go a thrifle far with him, seein' he's what he is."

Gogarty nodded.

"Go on," he said.

"Now, about them rifles—" there was the suspicion of a chuckle in the general's voice— "there's a lot more things true than tellable, of course, Colonel. We're both in the wrong, one with the other. We've got—no sense in denyin' it—rifles we shouldn't have; and you're short a gentleman ye want mighty bad. How'd it be now—" Gogarty could almost see the glint in Kelly's eye— "if we exchanged?

"Lend me the loan of the car, and I'll find Gunter for ye; an' more, I'll pass ye me word the rifles'll be out of Kyleranny district by tomorrow. If ye don't like it, Colonel, two things is goin' to happen: ye'll lose Gunter, for I b'lieve some o' them lads wouldn't be beyond putting daylight through him; an' we'll have Kyleranny turned upside down very likely. What d'ye say?"

Gogarty hesitated. Entering into compacts with Sinn Fein was no part of his official duties, and—if it were known—would lead to trouble of the heaviest caliber for him. Yet the peace of the district over which he presided for the Crown meant much to him, and he could envisage the orders he would receive from Dublin if the missing officer were not found. Reprisals would be sharp and fierce, as had been proved in other less fortunate areas; it would mean the plunging of peaceful Kyleranny into all the horrors of war; murder, ambush . . . Quickly he made up his mind.

"Very well, John," he said, "that's a

bargain. I've your word you'll have those rifles out of here in twenty-four hours, and—" he looked at Dennistoun—"the two of us'll come with you up into the Mountain, just to see fair play with Gunter. I'll fix him somehow, to keep a still tongue in his head; I don't think it'll be hard."

Kelly swung himself into the car and held out his hand to Gogarty.

"There's me word on it, Colonel," he said earnestly. "But do you an' the major keep backward in this. It's a job for me—an', bedad," he added under his breath, "it's no job I like. I'm takin' me life in me hands for you—an' for Kyleranny."

He slipped in the clutch, and the car moved off on the mountain road.

CAPTAIN GUNTER continued to smile to himself as he drove along the dark and hilly track. He had a warm and pleasant feeling of superiority in having so eminently scored off Colonel Gogarty, and promised himself a repetition of the score when, by efficient scouting, he should have located the arms and led the Ragpickers straight to the spot in the morning. The good colonel—he chuckled—would for once see what a real soldier could do in tackling these natives.

About his present errand he had no doubt whatever. This was easy. These country bumpkins were a different matter to the Dublin lot. With Michael Collins, now, or Mulcahy, you had to watch your step; but here in Kyleranny—he almost laughed aloud as he thought of their faces in the morning.

He swung down a steep descent, where the road dipped into a narrow valley, wood choked, and with a tiny stream at the bottom. The trees met over the track and made a tunnel of darkness, into which Gunter plunged the car, his eyes straining in the gloom; here, he thought, would be a suitable place to park the car and take up his task on foot. He reached forward for the hand brake.

Next second the heavy Sunbeam had plunged into a trench dug straight across the road. The front axle snapped like a carrot, there was a loud explosion as one of the tires blew up; and Gunter found himself pinned under the wheel, helpless, and with a dozen dim shapes about him on the road. He had walked straight into an ambush, such as were common enough in the distracted Ireland of that day.

Next moment the dim shapes had leaped at him, and he had been dragged roughly from the car. A noisome piece of sacking was clapped over his head, his arms were pinioned by men on either side of him, and a third man—Bat Mooney—sat heavily on his chest. He struggled furiously to get at his pistol, but his captors were too much for him, and he collapsed, limp and helpless, on the grass at the roadside. A man—Timsy Sullivan—bent over him.

"What'll we do with him, Bat?" he asked. "Sthrip him, maybe, an' see could he run? 'Twould rise the heart in ye for to see him coursin' the Mountain in his shirt, the spalpeen!"

Bat turned a glimmering white face over his shoulder, and interrupted his task of strapping Gunter up with a piece of rope.

"Run, is it?" he snarled. "It's on the coals of hell he'll be runnin' this night, Tim Sullivan, be the time I've done with him!"

He yanked Gunter to a sitting position.

"Do ye commence yer prayers now, me splendid gintleman," he said, "for, by the saints, ye need them!"

Gunter returned to himself, being frog marched across the open toward a dark mass of scraggy timber that hung beard-like on the face of the hill. He had the very uncomfortable consciousness that all was not as well with him as it might be, and the escorting shadows, moving in ominous silence, were not in the least reassuring. He remembered, with a kind of shudder, certain other instances of abduction he had heard of, from which the abducted one had not returned to tell his tale. *Spurlos versenkt*—sunk without trace—he recollected the mess term for

them in Dublin; such was their epitaph, poor devils, and some nook or cranny in the hills their grave. So it had been hinted by people who knew, although Gunter—the magnificent Gunter—had not paid much attention to the rumors. Careless idiots they were, he imagined, who let themselves get outside the charmed circle of soldiers and police. Such inefficients, he had shrugged, deserved all they got.

He cast a nervous glance about him into the shadows on the mountain side, and recognized, with a rush of horror, that his was just their situation. And that Kyleranny was no whit less likely to exact a penalty—already he had shifted from his ground of despising these country boys—than the easterners had been. Desperately he tried a bluff.

"Stop it, you men," he ordered crisply. "You don't know what you're playing with. You'll have half the troops in Ireland on your tails over this. Stop it, I say!"

The cortège moved onward in the dark. No one said a word in answer to his threats. He tried again.

"Listen to me," he said, with an affectation of jocularity. "This may seem a bit of fun to you boys, but, begad, it's serious enough. When they miss me back in Kyleranny there'll be the devil to pay for the lot of you. You can't lay hands on British officers like this. It'll mean ten years' jail for you. Take my advice now, and turn back like good lads. I'll treat it as a joke, and say no more about it."

Once again the dead uncompromising silence. It began to attack Gunter's nerves, and he fought and tore hysterically at his bonds; the clear commanding voice trailed off into something approaching a wail.

"Let me go!" he yammered. "You'll pay for this, all of you. We'll smoke the lot of you out—you'll remember tonight as long as you live. Let me go—!"

Captain Gunter of Intelligence was getting a new viewpoint on military service in Ireland. Rough peasants these were, the type he had so confidently despised, and with nothing about them of the soldierly smartness of the Germans he had so often encountered in the prisoners' cages in France. Those he had been accustomed to toy with, probing them with cunning questions, enjoying their nervous discomfiture; but these men were somehow different. There was a grimness about them that melted his own complacent superiority as fire melts wax; the bluster departed from him, leaving the shell of a badly frightened man—and still his captors preserved their terrifying silence.

At length he broke down and began to plead, questioning them as to their intentions with him, demanding to be released, inventing childish threats. The deadly imperturbability of the three men broke down his veneer of reserve; there were tears in his voice.

Bat Mooney spoke suddenly.

"*Ach!*" he said disgustedly. "It's better for the likes of you, Captain, to keep out of spyin' in Ireland. It's beyond you. Take a howlt of yourself, now, me gallant officer, an' remember your prayers the mother taught you at her knee. The Lord be good to her, Captain—for she's losin' her lovely son this night!"

At the wood's edge the procession halted, and Bat turned to the miserable Gunter.

"Come you here, now, Captain," he said in ironic consolation. "'Twill be over soon enough. Let you try can you not stand up to the bullet and go like a man."

IN THE DARKNESS of the trees a party of men were digging frantically. They were burying rifles, the erstwhile load of the ass cart, and the very cargo which Gunter had so light heartedly come out to discover. At sight of his escort they came to the brink of the shadows, armed and inquiring. Bat, dragging Gunter sack-like, reassured them.

"Whist," said he. "Gather round now, boys, and see what we've here for you."

The new faction—ten or a dozen of them—clustered about him, and there were curses loud and deep. Gunter heard them, with the remains of his composure ebbing from his fingertips. These were no corner boys up here, but desperate men, driven from their homes, on the run for months as like as not, and foregathered here in this lonely spot. Little mercy to be looked for from them.

A growl ran round the circle, and Gunter heard the click of released safety catches. He strung himself up for the shock of the bullet, but Bat interrupted.

"Hold on, boys," he said. "Would ye do murder? A spy he is, an' a spy's trial he shall have. Take him within now, an' we'll coort-martial him, decent an' regular."

Gunter found himself lifted bodily and carried into the wood. A door, cunningly hidden in the blackest of the underbrush, was thrust open, and he was bundled down a flight of steps, scientifically engineered into the hillside. It was a mined dugout, precisely of the pattern familiar in the trenches of France; constructed by Irish soldiers trained there.

Twenty feet down the stairs gave on a room, lined with boarding and fitted with rows of bunks on either side. A lamp burned on the table amid the remains of a meal, and the air was hot and stagnant from many crowded bodies. Gunter was roughly deposited on a bench, and Bat turned to the assembly.

"Men," he said soberly, "I b'lieve neither you nor me's any ways instructed in coort-martial proceedings; but this man'll get a fair trial, an' the chance to speak for himself, an' what more could anny one ask. I'll now tell ye a thing or two about him, an' then ye'll vote, an' then the prisoner'll say what he's to say. Fair enough, eh, boys?"

"Fair enough—"

"Have ye anything against it, prisoner?"

Gunter said nothing, largely because he could not. His mouth was dry, and his tongue stuck to the roof of it.

Bat proceeded.

"This man," he said, "is a captain, I b'lieve it is, in the English army. He's been sent to Kyleranny, it's well known, for to spy an' to raise trouble. With owld Gogarty, now, or the polis, we could get along, maybe; they're decent enough lads, some of them. An' whatever 'twas, they'd do us no great harm with their ridin' an' searchin'. We c'd leave them be. But this playboy here—" he pointed at Gunter—"is one of them that puts us poor fellas on the run, an' shoots us in Dublin Castle. It's time they were learned a lesson, say I, boys."

He cleared his throat and glanced round the room.

"Understand me, boys," he said, "it's death or nothin' for this man. Ye'll pass your vote, one way or t'other; an' then the pris'ner'll be allowed to speak."

"Hold on there," interrupted one of the others. "Does John Kelly know about this?"

"He does not," Bat replied instantly. "An' it's equal to John Kelly which way it goes. Maybe," he added darkly, "'twon't be so long before we'll be coort-martialing the same John Kelly . . ."

There was a little silence, and Bat seized his advantage.

"Pass yer votes, now," he said. "You, John Kane?"

A tall, black faced man rose to his feet and solemnly lifted a hand.

"Death!" he said.

"Seumas O'Toole?"

"Death!"

"Martin Murphy?"

"Death!"

So it went on, the single dread syllable escaping from each haggard faced man round the room. There were no adverse voices, and finally the vote came to Bat Mooney himself.

"And I say death!" he said passionately. The veins stood out on his forehead, and his blue eyes were congested with emotion. "Prisoner, the sentence of the coort is that ye die by shootin', an' may the Lord have mercy on ye!"

"Hold on there again," interrupted

another man. "Let's hear what he's to say first."

Gunter choked, his face ashen.

"You—you wouldn't dare!" he muttered.

Bat Mooney laughed bitterly.

"That's all ye know," he said. "Hear me now—" he turned to the others. "Shootin' at dawn's considered the proper affair, where he comes from, I'm told. It's one now—" he pulled out an ancient silver turnip—"an' that'll give him two hours, say, to compose himself. We've no priest, but then he's a Protestant, annyway. Listen here, me bold Captain—" he swung round on Gunter, who had dropped his head in his hands—"in two hours time ye're for a firin' party; for the love of the saints ye don't believe in, brace up an' show ye know how to die."

THE GENERAL applied his brakes at the top of the hill.

"We'll go easy here," he said over his shoulder. "Maybe the boys have some little stratagem at the bottom."

The car slid down the steep incline, and suddenly the general brought it to a grinding stop. He pointed ahead into the darkness.

"Will you look at that now?" he inquired. In the middle of the road, its hind wheels in air, was Gunter's Sunbeam, a bent and splintered wreck. Kelly leaped out.

"Annyhow," he said, "there's one thing. There's been no shootin', praise the saints, or ye'd find bullet pocks on the car here. But—" he scratched his head—"I'm thinking Captain Gunter'll be a sorry man this night, gintlemen."

"Well, come along," said Gogarty irritably. "Are we going to stand here and do nothing? We'd better scatter and search, I suppose. But remember, Kelly, there'll be the worst kind of trouble if he's come to any harm."

The general laughed.

"Harm!" he said. "There's no sayin' what the boys'll do to the likes of him. An' faith, whatever 'twas, he'd desarve it—an' it's yourself, Colonel, that knows it. Ye'd be no Irishman if ye didn't. Now," he went on, "here's where I've to leave ye, an' go do a thing me heart's not in—save Gunter's skin for him, no less! Do ye stop here, now, while I come back to ye."

"Not a bit of it," said Gogarty at once. "We're coming with you, Kelly. There may be trouble, and three are better than one."

John Kelly spoke decidedly.

"Ye'll not, then," he said. "I'd have ye remember, Colonel Gogarty, ye're not in Kyleranny now an' ye've not the troopers with ye. Ye're guests in counthry that's not yours, gintlemen, an' ye've got to do as ye're told. Ye'll stay here by the car."

"I see—" Gogarty turned to Dennistoun with a chuckle—"John's what we call an ould bould hand—he's got something up here in the hills he's not a bit anxious for us to see, eh, John?"

"An' I'm not denying that same," said Kelly. "For why'd I lead ye straight to what's taken us months to—" He broke off short. "Ah, enough o' this," he went on. "Colonel, an' you, Major, I've your word ye'll take no action on what ye may see this night?"

"I've risked my commission once already, bargaining with you, you old scoundrel," said Gogarty. "Once more won't make it any worse. You've my word on it. And you, Dennistoun?"

"And mine," said the major. "Everything's highly irregular, and we'd get a sweet half hour on the carpet if it came out. But I daresay John won't give us away."

"Not I," said John. "Me own actions won't bear lookin' into very far by me own superiors, I don't mind tellin' ye. Now, follow me, gintlemen—an' when I tell ye to stop, do ye stop without anny questions about it. Ye're on dangerous ground."

"So I should imagine," said Gogarty. "Lead on."

TWENTY voices roared lustily in the tunneled dugout; it went with a swing; the walls echoed to it and Gunter, huddled wretchedly in a corner, his head in his hands, was forced to listen.

"Let cowards mock and tyrants frown,
Ah, little do we care.
A felon's cap's the noblest crown
An Irishman can wear."

Bat Mooney sat on the table, conducting with waving hands; like every Irishman, he knew the power of song to move himself and his kind, and he was using the century-old song to keep his companions worked up to the necessary pitch of enthusiasm for the task that they had set themselves. It was after two now, and dawn was not very far away.

"God bless the clay where rest today
The felons of our land . . . "

"Hear that, Captain? Ah, well, ye'll soon be joinin' the boys your dirty English hung an' shot, an' all for bein' loyal to their counthry!"

He held up his hand at the end of the verse, and the singing ceased.

"Boys," he said, "be quiet now. We've a guest here with us, for a short time, an' maybe we'll be havin' him vexed with our music. An' that reminds me, Captain—" he turned to Gunter—"maybe ye've some little things ye wish to see to before ye come outside with us. Would ye care to write a line to anny one, now? I'll lend ye pencil an' paper."

Gunter raised a gray face.

"Is—isn't there any way out of this?" he asked pitifully.

Bat shook his head.

"No, me brave fella," he said. "Was there anny way out for the fine lads that swung, up and down the globe of Ireland, for what ye murdherin' upstarts of English called sedition? Traitors, ye said they were. It's you that are the traitors —ye'd sell your dirty souls for pay, an' buy your dirty lives."

"I'll buy mine, if you'll sell it." Gunter snatched at the ray of hope.

"An' what price'll ye pay, may I be askin', Captain?" The Intelligence officer should have been warned by the sudden smoothness of Bat's tone. "Let's see, now, what ye think ye're worth."

Gunter thought for a long minute, while the stuffy room remained silent. Bat still perched on the table, looking down at his victim.

"See here," Gunter said at last, a crafty light flickering in his dark eyes, his hands shaking with excitement. "You want arms, don't you—rifles and so on; more than you've got?"

Bat continued to inspect him much as an entomologist looks at an insect.

"Go on, Captain," he said.

"Well—" Gunter shot a glance about the room, avoiding every one's eye— "I'll get them for you."

"An' how'll ye do that, me gallant Captain?"

"Simple." Gunter smiled. "You've twenty men here, and rifles and ammunition. Swear to me to let me go, and I'll arrange for Gogarty and twenty of his men to come up the road this morning. Let them walk into the trap on the road down below, and you'll get their rifles— all twenty of them—and Colonel Gogarty as well. With him in hand you'll be able to make your own terms with anything Dublin sends down."

Dead, complete silence fell on the gathering. Men scarcely seemed to breathe, and Bat Mooney gripped the table edge until his knuckles shone white under the lamp.

"An' ye'd do that?" he asked in a whisper. "Sell yer own friends?"

Gunter looked down at the floor.

"I've got to live," he replied.

A muffled gasp broke the silence, but Bat checked it.

"An' ye'll write an advice to Col'nel Gogarty to walk into a trap?" he inquired.

Gunter nodded.

"Give me a pencil," he said.

Bat handed him one without a word and loosed his hands. Gunter wrote rapidly on a scrap of paper, then handed it up to Mooney.

"That'll do it," he said. "Now you'll swear to me—"

With a lightning leap Bat Mooney was off the table, and had struck Gunter a blow across the face with the back of his hand.

"Ye damned, low livin', white livered cur!" he broke out. "Men—" he swung round on the others— "ye heard that? Offerin' to run his own troops into a noose! The decent English boys below in Kyleranny—they're decent lads, for all they're doin' a dirty job—an' ould Gogarty that knows what he knows, an' knows how to keep a still tongue, God save him! He'd see them shot like dogs on the road—to save his own yella skin! What'll we do with him—ah, what but snuff him out quick, to get the stink out of our nosthrils? Are ye with me?"

Baying like hounds, they seized Gunter bodily and dragged him up the steep stairway. The wretched man shrieked and groveled, trailing on the ground, bruised and battered by the wooden treads; but they were deaf to his prayers and promises, and hauled him out into the wood, now faintly lighted by the first streaks of dawn.

"Fetch rifles," Bat ordered. "Who'd have the pleasure of shootin' this mongrel pup?" A dozen men thrust forward. "Stick him against a tree, then! Come on, now, ye damn crawlin' snake!"

But Gunter was beyond hearing. Fear, and the horrid revulsion of the last minutes, had done its work with him, and he sagged limp and fainting in their hands. Rapidly he was propped against the trunk of a gnarled oak, and Bat himself ran ropes about him to hold him erect. Then he stepped back, and turned to the row of men with the cocked rifles.

"When I give ye the word, now," he said.

"STOP!"

John Kelly, a stocky, commanding figure in the dawn, stood not ten yards from them.

"What's all this bobbery?" he asked curtly. "Did I not tell ye, Bat Mooney, that there was to be no shootin' in Kyleranny without I passed the word?"

The firing party lowered their rifles slowly. Bat stood silent for a moment. Then he faced Kelly with a snarl.

"Stand back, John Kelly!" he ordered, his voice thick with rage. "An' stay you well out o' this. We're killin' a weasel that's been too long above ground, an' by the saints we'll have no interference. Ready an' present, men!"

"Ye'll do nothin' of the kind." The general's voice was firm and decided, and no man of the firing party moved. "Bat Mooney, come you here to me, now, an' let's have the meanin' of it all. Maybe ye're right about the weasel—I'm not sayin' one way or t'other, till I hear more of it. Meantime, boys—" he turned a gunmetal-blue stare on the rest of them— "ground arms. I'm handlin' this. Would ye disobey?"

The rifles were laid on the turf.

"Now, Bat—" said Kelly.

For a moment Bat stood irresolute.

"Ach, ye're too much for me, John Kelly," he said. "Listen to this, now, an' see what ye say to it. Me an' some o' the boys found this brat goin' about dhrivin' on one of his spyin' jobs, to be sure. An' we cot him, an' took him up here, the way we'd see what was to be done with the blackgyard. By coort-martial we thried him, as a spy an' an enemy, an' to death he was condemned—"

"An' who gave you the right to thry by coort-martial or anny other way, Bat?" interrupted Kelly. Bat shuffled his feet in the grass and looked uncomfortable.

"Annyway, we did—although I'm not sayin' we'd have done it at the latter end. But see now, what happened. This fella, after beggin' an' prayin' for his life like a woman—no, there's no decent woman'd have acted so—offers us—an' witness this, boys—to draw Gogarty an' the Ragpickers into an ambush for us, would we spare his rotten life. He did, no less."

"What's that ye say?" The general's face hardened into an iron mask. "Is this true?"

Bat fumbled in his pocket and produced Gunter's note.

"There's his own insthructions to Gogarty," he said, and passed it across to Kelly.

The general read it in the faint morning light, and swore under his breath.

"Weasel it is, Bat!" he commented. "Faith, I didn't think they bred things like this."

He stood looking about him at the clustering fugitives, at Bat, still sick with fury, and at the fainting man tied to the tree. Then he laughed shortly.

"Men," he said, "ye'll leave this thing to me. The scum's not worth a bullet. We'll not waste clean powder on him. No, but we'll put the black shame on him, the way he'll not hold his head up again while he lives. Trust me!"

"'Twasn't the spyin' business that had us mad," interrupted Bat, as if in justification, "but the notion he seemed to have that he was worth more than Gogarty. 'Take him,' he says, 'an' ye can strike what bargain ye like with Dublin!' The damn ruffian! An' owld Col'nel Gogarty below there that's the friend of us all."

Kelly laughed outright.

"Bat," he said, "you're half a fool an' the other half's not sensible, an' I've told ye that before. But there's times when ye get nearer to the truth than ye know."

There was a rustle among the branches behind them, and Colonel Gogarty and Dennistoun stepped into the ring of dark faces.

"What's all this, men?" The colonel's deep voice cut across an astonished silence. He looked at the reviving Gunter and flicked a finger. "Cut him down at once," he ordered, as if he were on the parade ground in Kyleranny barracks.

Bat Mooney went across without a word and executed the order.

"Now, Mr. Kelly," said Gogarty, "I suggest first of all that any of these gentlemen who may not be anxious for me to recognize them—and I've seen no one's face as yet—should retire. The Kyleranny boys may stop. I know them anyhow."

There was a ripple of low laughter among the ragged, hard featured refugees, and a dozen of them withdrew silently into the shadows of the wood.

"There," said Gogarty. "Now we're all friends—or part of friends. John, what's all this?"

Kelly stood for a moment deep in thought.

"The Colonel," he said at last, "I've a dirty job to do, an' I don't like it, for it'll hurt ye sore. An' yet, it's got to be done. Will yourself an' the major run an eye over this piece of work?"

He handed Gunter's note to the colonel, and stood with folded arms, watching Gunter rise to his feet and recover himself.

Gogarty read the missive and his face grew black.

"My God!" was all he said, and passed it to Dennistoun.

GUNTER chose this moment to advance with much of his old airiness.

"You'll not take too much notice of that affair, Colonel Gogarty," he said. "It was a case of duress, of course."

Gogarty eyed him in silence for an instant.

"Captain Gunter," he began, but Dennistoun thrust him aside, and faced the other, his face crimson and his speech thick with fury.

"You dirty hound!" he exploded. "D'you know what you've done? To save your silly life, Gunter, you've let down every Englishman in Ireland." He whipped round on the circle of onlookers. "You, Colonel Gogarty," he went on, "and you, Kelly, and you Kyleranny boys, forget I'm Major Dennistoun of the Ragpickers—" he choked over the name —"and remember only that I'm an Englishman.

"This thing here's an Englishman, too, I'm sorry to say; but not so sorry as he's going to be. He'll lose his commission, of course, over this—but before he does—" he ran a finger down the buttons of his

khaki jacket—"I'm going to show him and you just what an Englishman thinks of him."

He threw his belt and coat to Bat Mooney.

"Hold those!" he said. "Now—" to Gunter—"put up your dirty hands and fight, you!"

It was said later in Kyleranny that Dennistoun did more for the English cause that morning than any six Irish secretaries put together. Gogarty stepped out of the circle, and turned his back with instinctive diplomacy. John Kelly smiled, as one that understands and approves a gesture; and the Irish lads from Kyleranny grinned like terriers at the scene.

Not so Gunter, however. He drew himself up, white and reserved.

"I'm not brawling with you, sir," he said stiffly. "There have been enough irregularities this morning already, and I shall have something to say to the authorities on the subject of the queer ideas of discipline that appear to obtain here—"

Bat Mooney, the irrepressible, interrupted him.

"Ach, Colonel darlin'," he implored, "leave us have him for ten minutes, after all. 'Twill be enough—"

Gogarty had turned once more, and now he strode up to Gunter.

"You'll either fight," he said, "or go back to Kyleranny under close arrest, and I'll send you to the station this afternoon with a troop as escort. Make your choice." There was that in his voice which turned Gunter even whiter. "Now—put 'em up!"

In a dead silence the Intelligence captain removed his coat, and faced Dennistoun under the growing light of the morning.

At five o'clock the Dublin train was puffing and panting in the Kyleranny terminus. In the corner of a first class carriage, a deflated figure with his head sunk on his chest and suspiciously puffy about the features, sat Gunter; and on the platform outside, his genial face for once gloomy and overcast, the colonel walked up and down alone. About in groups, with an air of frustration, were an extra number of corner boys, and John Kelly, in elaborate detachment from everything, smoked his old pipe by the waiting room. Probably his presence and the towering colonel's eye of doom were all that stood between the defeated Gunter and a hostile demonstration; but in the face of these the corner boys were silent. Nevertheless it was an uncomfortable moment for the dejected figure in the corner.

The train gathered way, and Gogarty, swinging round, caught Kelly's eye. The colonel held in his hand a scrap of paper. Very slowly and deliberately he tore it to bits and let them flutter to the platform—the evidence which, once in the hands of Dublin Castle, would have blasted Gunter's military career once and for all. Kelly smiled faintly: it was once again a gesture after his own heart.

Dennistoun, who had kept sedulously in the background, strolled up.

"And that's that, sir!" he said to Gogarty. "We're well out of a nasty business."

Bat Mooney overheard, and looked up at him with a grin of purest impudence.

"And hurroosh to yerself, Major!" he said.

Gogarty smiled.

"No, Bat," he said reminiscently. "I rather believe it's hurroosh to John Kelly!"

The CAMP-FIRE

A free-to-all meeting place for readers, writers and adventurers

A NOTE from Harold Lamb, relative to his narrative, "Richard the Lion Heart", in this issue:

New York City

Richard of England, Coeur de Lion, must have a word said about him. Long before Scott wrote "The Talisman" the errant king of England had been a hero in legend. But of late years the debunkers have been busy, and they have not forgotten Coeur de Lion. They have plastered mud over the great warrior of the legends, saying that Richard was "a bad son, a bad husband, a worse king." A kind of all 'round black sheep, a waster, good for nothing except carousing and treacherous fighting at the head of his boon companions, the mercenary men-at-arms.

We are not concerned with Richard as a king. It is true that he was one of the bravest men and the worst monarchs ever to rule England. But then we must remember that Richard was practically an exile in his youth, and when he came to the throne he was already pledged to the Crusade. Unlike his rival, Philip-Augustus of France, he devoted himself to the Crusade instead of the government of his realm. And when he journeyed back from the East, he was seized and made captive by the European princes unlawfully—for it was against all written and unwritten law to seize the person of a Crusader returning from the war in the East. When Richard was at last ransomed—at a further cost to England—he not unnaturally devoted himself to vengeance.

So much for Richard's motives as a king.

THE real interest of his life lies in his Crusade, the brief years between 1190-1194. And here we are faced with a puzzle. Was Richard an invincible fighter—the real Lion Heart of the Crusade—or a dismal failure? Scott pictures him as a hero incarnate, and modern historians, especially of the

French school, picture him as a trouble-maker and an inefficient leader*. "The presence of the English king," one writer says, "was the ruin of the undertaking." Which extreme is the truth? And what is the answer to the riddle?

There is an answer, and in justice to the memory of a gallant man, it ought to be made clear.

When Richard landed on the coast at Acre, after the roistering captures of Messina and Cyprus en route, he was full of confidence and eager to come to grips with Saladin's army. Until then he had tasted endless victory won in Europe by his own sword and his handful of followers, from the tournaments of France to the grim wall of Acre. Acre itself, after two years' siege, had yielded as if by magic at his coming. He had lived surrounded by minstrels, by cup companions and by fighting men over whom he was master undisputed.

Between the surrender of Acre, July 12, and his first conference with Al Adil, September 5, the careless and ever fortunate Richard becomes the troubled and moody leader.

CONSIDER his actions: His march toward Jaffa delays and delays again; he keeps his army on the defensive, even in the open fighting at Arsuf; he fortifies Jaffa, and tries to rebuild Ascalon; constantly he importunes Saladin for terms of peace; twice, when the army crawls† toward Jerusalem, he is the first to urge a retreat. No doubt about it, the debonair Coeur de Lion has become a timid general. Why?

It is not that Richard was wholly unfit as a commander. A worthless leader usually sacrifices his men to try to gain an advantage. St. Louis of France did so two generations later, without being blamed. Richard safeguarded his men, and fought the veteran Moslem army led by the ever dangerous Saladin on slightly better than even terms during his year of command in Palestine.

I THINK the answer is this: The moment he set out from Acre, at the head of a great army of all nationalities, Richard found himself confronted by what the French call the *grande guerre*—the war of large armies maneuvering over open country. The country was strange to him, and the fate of the Crusade itself hung upon a decisive battle. Until then the Lion Heart had only experienced the foray-and-siege warfare of Europe where his own prowess in arms could wrest success out of a struggle in which at most three or four thousand men were engaged on each side.

And it seems as if Richard realized at once his inability to command in such a war as this. He could not relinquish the command. For one thing the other leaders of princely rank—even Conrad, the ablest of them—had deserted him. The rank and file of the army was determined to press on to Jerusalem, and Richard had to lead them.

SO HE became afraid, not of personal peril, but of disgrace and disaster. Unable to turn back, he must go on, realizing his own inability to cope with the Moslem armies. The blind devotion of the common men only made his situation more intolerable. The bad tidings from England where his brother, John Lackland, and Philip-Augustus were overrunning his lands, in spite of their oaths to him, added to his mental torment.

We do not know what Richard thought about it, but what he did in his dilemma is pathetically clear. While he shielded his army in camp and town, he went out himself, with a small picked following, to engage the Moslems at every chance. Instead of sacrificing his men, he risked his own life. Tried to win a war as he had won tournaments so often. He stormed hill towers, captured the Egyptian caravan, drove the Moslem warriors before him in a dozen hand-to-hand encounters. Possibly he sought death in these ventures.

It was a hopeless task, to gain victory by such minor feats. It was not war but it was magnificent, and Richard's final stand at Jaffa when he waded ashore in the face of a victorious army is about the finest thing of its kind in the records of history.

GRANT that Richard of England was a poor king, a trouble-maker and a failure as a general in his greatest test. But remember that he hazarded his own life, not his men's, and stuck to his cause. He was one of the most courageous men who ever breathed. Saladin himself said that he would rather lose the Holy Land to Richard than to any other. And the name of *Malik Ric* (King Richard) has been preserved among the Moslems as the greatest of all the Crusaders.

I have tried to set down Richard's actions during those years 1191-1192, without prejudice for or against the English king. Those actions tell their own story of his character. And I think that Richard will keep his surname of the Lion Heart in spite of the debunkers. —HAROLD LAMB

*Scott, who was a conscientious historian even in writing fiction, represents Richard as harassed and abandoned by the princes who plotted against him. Modern writers explain that Richard's arrogance estranged the other princes who withdrew from him on that account.

The truth, here, lies between the two views. Richard was overbearing in seizing the leadership, and he lost prestige by taking sides in the Montserrat-Lusignan feud—the two parties claiming the kingship of Jerusalem. But by then some of the best of the leaders—Barbarossa, and the count of Flanders and William of Sicily—had died, and it is clear to this writer at least that Philip-Augustus and the Austrians were only half hearted in the Crusade. They seized upon Richard's conduct as an excuse for getting out.

†It must be remembered that the Crusaders lacked horses, having perhaps only one man mounted to five or ten Moslem horsemen. This brought about the curious situation in which Saladin, on the defensive, was able to attack at will, while Richard on the offensive could only crawl about.

ANOTHER buzzard story:

Washington, D. C.

Read Bro. Harriman's, *et als*, "vulture statistics," and now having been for many years silent as to breaking into print, will add what I know about the said birds. Mr. Harriman is exactly right in so far as my observation goes, *re* eating young lambs,

etc., and I think as to the cause. Have shot the common Virginia turkey buzzard in the act of goug ing out the eyes of living but sick or crippled stock.

Another thing I do know about buzzards is that unbelievable scenting power attributed to them is not what they find things by. It's *eyesight*. To prove it, watch one when he sights a dead thing, or supposedly dead, and if you will put binoculars on the buzzard you will see the almost invisible signaling he does in certain ways—style of flight, etc., much as the aviators do this day. Again, in some degree as the western Indians signaled news to watchers by riding certain ways—in a circle for instance, to inform their watchers of persons approaching. Guess Mr. Harriman has seen that done too.

NOW to prove that a buzzard finds his prey by sight and not smell: When I was about twelve years old, one bright day in spring I was sitting in the sun back of the smokehouse at my old home in Virginia. Noticed a buzzard circling slowly, and each time a little lower, and narrower, and seeming to be going to light on the hillside near me. I always hated the things and, thinking it might light near enough to give me a chance at it with a rock, I "froze" and stayed froze. Finally it lit on the ground about twenty-five yards off, sat still, not noticing me at all, but with neck stretched and eyes intently on a point in front of it, watching something very keenly. Suddenly it gave an awkward but quick hop or two, and made a quick and very strong dig into the ground, about the third dig raising a big mole in its beak, which it proceeded to eat very calmly.

I threw my rock, and it flew off. That bird had seen that mole working, and the sod moving from a height of I don't know how much, but out of rifle shot. No possible chance for it to have been any other way, as sod was heavy, and sign plainly left showed mole to have been dug up from at least three inches deep.

The birds are a nuisance, and I firmly believe a spreader of stock diseases. Ought to be killed everywhere, instead of protected. —EDWIN C. PAYNE

THIS South American comrade says he hopes some time to contribute to the Camp-fire. I am taking the liberty of expediting matters by printing the present letter, which I'm sure will be of interest to many.

Buenos Aires, Argentina, S. A.

It may interest you to know that "Cry Havoc" resulted in many Britishers getting to know *Adventure* through my own badly thumbed and now bound copies. They little suspected what *Adventure* was.

Some day I may feel in the mood of contributing to the Camp-fire. I know and have worked in practically every country in S. A. My record is seven revolutions to date and I'm a peaceful man. I know that may sound fishy or contradictory but it's true. Incidentally Edgar Young's description of Lopez of Paraguay is getting to be the generally accepted one. Even Rasas here is being defended. Those times seem to have required dictators. Looks as if we're coming to it again, as witness South America: revolutions and then dictators in Peru, Chili, Bolivia, Argentina. A revolution started yesterday in Brazil and one almost in Ecuador and Cuba.

PARAGUAY, noted for its revolutions, is perhaps the most peaceful of all now. And mentioning Paraguay reminds me some one ought to write up its history. It's the most interesting and in its war against Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, Paraguay's sacrifice was greater than the much written one of Belgium in the late fight. The joke is the war was started because Paraguay was the most advanced on the continent. Best schools, the first railroad in S. A., telegraph when not even Argentina had one, steamship lines to Europe (1860) when steamships were starting—these being built in Paraguay, *not* Europe.

Industries now dead; cloths for example. Iron foundries also gone; the greatest gold reserve and soundest money. All this brought upon it the envy of the different politicians of neighboring countries. And when the war stopped, the women, carrying their babies, put a yoke on their necks and ploughed. Even today, three generations later, Paraguay has less population than before the war. No one thought of "devastated Paraguay". She was left to shift for herself. Even so late as 1914, when I first went there, in the large public market, there were but two men, one a Spaniard and another, an Italian. The rest, all women. They had built the houses, reared new generations, and not even sympathy from the rest of the world. No League of Nations or other body to even discuss, let alone right, the tremendous crime committed—the annihilation of the then most progressive country of S. A., and considering that the Civil War in U. S. had just ceased, perhaps the best organized and soundest.

Some day if time permits I'll again dig into old documents and papers, talk with the few veterans left, and try to do my bit to at least have the rest of the world know one of the most interesting bits of reading. In justice, let's say that decent Argentines are now ashamed of what happened. Uruguayans also. Brazil a little backward because it was then an empire and prefers even now, for political reasons, not to cancel a war debt she will likely never collect.

—LAUREANO TUERO Y GARCIA

E. E. HARRIMAN, of Ask Adventure, sends on a reader's letter giving additional information about Meteor Crater, and posing a couple of difficult questions. If Mr. Beauchamp's figures are correct, it

would seem that the State of Arizona may boast of the biggest known meteorite in the world.

Winslow, Arizona

Having read your answer to Mr. M. M. Ashley of Fort Wayne, Indiana, in regards to the meteor which fell in the vicinity of this place, I wish to pass on to you some first hand information.

Meteor Crater or Meteor Mountain lies twenty miles west of Winslow and five miles off the road, the road being the Government State road No. 66, the main highway from California. This crater lies in a fairly level plain, as plains go, and is visible from the road for many miles each way. The crater proper is a large hole with almost sheer sides to a depth of about six hundred feet at the center, and the distance across is placed at fifteen hundred yards, or almost four miles around the rim. The hill is not very high, about a hundred feet at the most, and the inside is almost a perfect circle. Fine motor road runs from Highway No. 66 to the foot of the rim, and a charge of twenty-five cents is made to help maintain the road, as it is owned by the Meteor Mining Company.

NOW for the meteor itself: It has been located definitely at a depth of thirteen hundred feet. A shaft has been sunk to a depth of six hundred feet where a large flow of water averaging about nine hundred gallons a minute was encountered; this stopped further development for the time being. Through the use of radio waves and other scientific apparatus the size and shape of the meteor has been fairly well determined. This shows that the meteor split at this depth into three parts, the largest of course being in the direct center of flight, and the two smaller fragments flying off at right angles to the parent body. The whole is computed as weighing in the neighborhood of eleven thousand tons.

It is composed of many different kinds of minerals including iridium, platinum, nickel and iron, the last two predominating, and is valued at about five thousand dollars a ton. Pieces picked up in the vicinity of the crater are sold for as much as four dollars a pound. It is an exceedingly hard ore, and can be worked only by special tools and saws. It is for the most part encrusted in a scale through which an oxygen torch can not cut.

IN ITS native state as found it looks like a piece of shale or rusty pot metal; after cutting, it has the appearance of polished steel, only it will not rust or lose its sheen after it is polished once. It is in much demand for jewelry, and such things. The largest piece found to my knowledge weighs two hundred ninety-five pounds, and is owned by Chief Two Guns. However, the average found runs from a few ounces to a couple of pounds, and they are awfully scarce now. A large crack in the earth outcropping every few miles can be traced from this meteor to the Grand Canyon, a distance of about a hundred miles air line.

Now for some questions that might be asked in regards to this wonder of nature:

Has any one any real data of when this occurred, or from what planet it came from? (I know some claim it came from the sun.) Does it answer the question as to what became of the cliff dwellers—did its terrific heat cremate them or did it give off a noxious gas which exterminated them?

—C. W. BEAUCHAMP

IF WE may judge from past experience, there are going to be a good many requests, later on, for the recent issue of our magazine (December 1st, 1930) containing "Riley Grannan's Last Adventure", by Sam C. Dunham. On previous occasions when the piece was reprinted, when our reserve supply of copies here in the office was exhausted, it was almost impossible to procure them. And as you know from advertisements which have appeared in this section, sometimes as much as five dollars has been offered for a single copy.

Consequently we shan't be surprised if our limited supply of spare copies of the issue in question does not last very long. To supplement the number, we are going to do something rather unusual, and that is to have "Riley Grannan" printed as a booklet. The format will be both attractive and convenient, and the price will be but ten cents per copy, to cover printing and mailing costs.

The booklets will probably be ready about January 5th, and may be procured by writing to this office.

A FEW words from R. V. Gery in connection with this story, "The General," in this issue:

Toronto, Ont.

For reasons which will be fairly obvious, none of the characters in "The General" are portraits. Nor is Kyleranny any recognisable locality. There are bits of Tipperary in it, and of Galway and Kerry and Mayo. But I hope that as a composite it may be a successful effort to portray for American readers something of the atmosphere of Ireland in the days of the last of her "troubles." Today, thanks largely to the efforts of a few men—Arthur Griffiths, the by now almost legendary Michael Collins, President Cosgrave leap to the mind on the Irish side; and the British leaders, Lloyd George, Birkenhead, and above all the King, on the other—Ireland is at peace. It isn't generally recognized, I think, what a

problem the British Government had before them in 1922, and what nerve it took to enter into negotiations with the "rebel" leaders.

But it was just the level headed men of the type of my John Kelly that, I think, saved Ireland and England as well from the fearful debacle to which the two countries seemed headed in the black days of 1920. No impartial history of those days seems to have been written; and while "The General" does not for an instant claim to the dignity of history, it is, I think, a fairly faithful portrait of conditions as they were in certain areas. —R. V. GERY

ABOUT ninety-day wonders, mule artillery and a "Chinee Band":

Los Angeles, Cal.

Have been a steady reader for years. The story "Shavetail" caused me to break out in this, and the Camp-fire note by the author, Major Wheeler-Nicholson deserves our hearty respects.

I too am loyal to my first outfit, also the "Second." Mine is the old 2nd Field Artillery, Van Deusen's old "jackass" outfit. Our battery was proud of having started the custom of blowing taps over a grave, in 1862, of holding the world's record with the little pack howitzer, wrested from the British; the regiment, of having been the only one to go around the world, and of our "Chinee Band"; and all of belonging to the "Second *Mule* Artillery".

At Camp Frémont we used to let some doughboy outfit get way up the road, then out-hike them. Our regular pace was way over regulation, and very fast. We made twenty-eight miles under pack, in less time than any of the doughboy regiments that had preceded us from Daly City to Camp Frémont. The "Chinee Band" provoked plenty of scraps. They used to parade around the regimental area, armed with every kind of bugle or trumpet, and a dozen assorted drums, from Civil War type up, playing the "Dobie Woman" loud enough to wake up a cigar stand Indian, at reveille march. If the 13th Infantry dared to expostulate, we would yell "Cariboo" and the war would be on. They never liked being reminded of the time carabao stampeded through their camp at night in the Islands. Legend has it that it took a week to comb their recruits out of the hills. (Sorry I can't send you the words of the tune. The lady must have been related to Madame B.)

AFTER being commissioned, and sent to the 54th, the old soldiers were very good to me. It seemed to center around the fact that "the lieutenant was *in* the Army before he got his commission." Some of the ninety day wonders never did act as if they were *in* the Army.

Several times our position of attention, peculiar to the old outfit, caused officers to ask me how long "since you left the Second?" We alway, stuck out our chests like warlike pouter-pigeonss held our arms forward, with elbows cocked, to avoid the canteen and gat, and our fists clenched, in front of the thigh.

—E. D. COOKE, 1ST. LIEUT. F. A. O. R. C.

ARTHUR M. DAVIS, of San Diego, Cal., writes in to say that Number 1369 in the catalogue of records of the Victor Phonograph Company is titled "Zamboanga."

AND now, does any one know this one?

Houlton, Oregon

The discussion in the November 1st issue of *Adventure* about the song, "Zamboango," brings up a question that I have wanted to ask for some time concerning another song heard in the Philippines.

The only title I ever heard given it was "Subic". The words, in the versions I heard, were quite banal, but the music is stirring. This song is very popular in the Marines, and I first heard it in San Diego when I was a boot at the recruit camp there. In fact, it seems to occupy the same place in the marines as "Hinky Dinky Parley Voo" did in the A. E. F. I feel certain that the song was found by the American forces when they first went into the Islands, because the music is too inspiring to be originally written for words about:

"The Captain got pneumonia
So we hoisted up the anchor
And we won't go back to Subic any more."

Of course, it wasn't pneumonia that the captain got. Incidently, most of the choruses end with the same last line as the above.

There used to be a kid in the Star cabaret in Olongopo who played it on a rickety piano about a dozen times a night, and that's the only place I can remember of hearing it played outside of a post. Coming back on the Chaumont with a bunch of short-timers from the 3rd Brigade in China, we used to sing it every night with verses expurgated by the chaplain for the benefit of the ladies on board thrown on the screen.

Here is one that I'm sure Major Wheeler-Nicholson could answer, and I would appreciate very much any information I could get on the origin of it, and what it meant before those unappreciative devil-dogs got hold of it. —J. H. JENNINGS

I HOPE we're not going to dispel all the glamour of this mysterious logging-camp wonder worker by exposing too many of his secrets. Here is a letter that seems to indicate the source of his recipe for Aztec ambrosia.

Kirkland Lake, Ontario, Can.

In a recent issue I notice a letter in Camp-fire mentioning that some man has rediscovered the secret of making a drink from chocolate in the ancient Aztec fashion. If you will refer to Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico" you will see a fairly detailed description of such a drink in the chapter on the social customs and life of the Aztecs.

As I have not got a copy of the book at hand I cannot give much detail, although I remember that Prescott's description sounds rather inviting.

—C. H. MILTON

Quoting from Chapter 1 of Book IV:

". . . The emperor (Montezuma) took no other beverage than the *chocolatl*, a potation of chocolate, flavored with vanilla and other spices, and so prepared as to be reduced to a froth of the consistency of honey, which gradually dissolved in the mouth. This beverage, if so it could be called, was served in golden goblets, with spoons of the same metal or of tortoise-shell finely wrought. The emperor was exceedingly fond of it, to judge from the quantity,—no less than fifty jars or pitchers being prepared for his own daily consumption! Two thousand more were allowed for that of his household . . ."

FROM the Bristol Bay country of Alaska come these interesting jottings, relayed to the Camp-fire by Victor Shaw. They were written by Paul Estle, who some time ago gave us news about mining possibilities around Goodnews Bay.

Kanatak, Alaska

I have been here since August sixth, and during that time there has been three days when the sun was shining most of the time. Nearly every day is the same with low clouds and light rains. I imagine the total precipitation isn't very high as it doesn't often rain heavily. I haven't seen much yet but they tell me there are some awful winds here in the winter time. I can well believe it when I look at the scrub willows clinging to the ground with no branches more than six inches off it. They look more like vines than trees. There are lots of blueberries but they all grow on bushes two to four inches high and are firmer and less juicy than those around Bethel.

They say this is one wild town then with plenty moonshine and plenty fighting. There are no law officials within reach, no radio, no commissioner, no marshal, no game warden. There is a fish commissioner who stays most of the time at the lake and has his headquarters there. By the way, there's an interesting occupation. Lots of people, both whites and natives, are making quite a bit catching trout out at the lake and on its streams. The fish commissioner gives them five cents a dried tail. They say it's funny to see some one come into the store with a string of dried trout tails like a string of wampum to buy something with. A recent ruling made by the fish commission is that small trout must be mild salted for inspection by the fish commissioner before payment because a small trout tail cannot be told from a small salmon tail. The idea of the bounty on trout is that they eat salmon eggs and young salmon.

Reindeer are scattered pretty thinly throughout the peninsula. Roy Fure, a Russian resident, estimates about ten thousand altogether, but this may be very unreliable. According to the bureau of education teacher and reindeer man at Egegik, the natives pay no attention at all to their deer in this particular section of the peninsula. Some have been found apparently starved to death because they got caught on the flats somehow and couldn't get back to good grazing ground. Fure thinks there are as many caribou running wild as there are reindeer in the peninsula. A man came in yesterday and said he had had caribou steak for dinner.

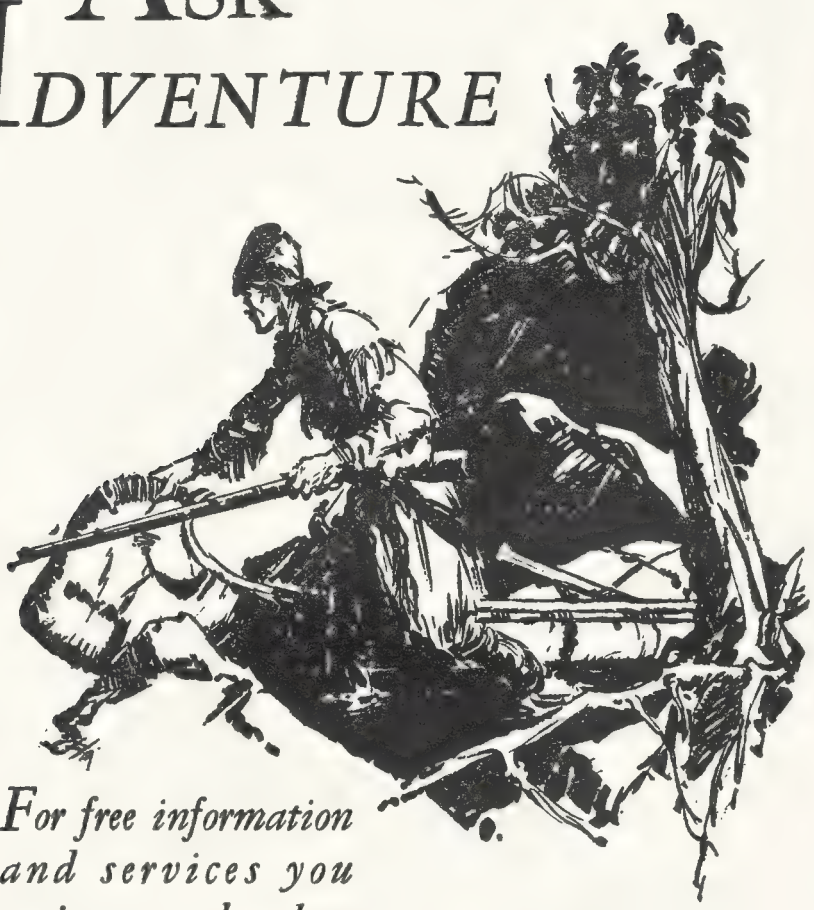
ANOTHER point of interest concerns native customs. At the small dances before mentioned one of the best dancers is a native girl about sixteen years old still going to school. She has a lot of scars along her throat as if she had nearly had her throat cut at one time. I asked the school teacher about it and she said she had inquired too and that the cuts were made by the medicine man of the village, whose chief remedy for any sort of ailment was bleeding at the throat. This girl, whose name is Dahlia and who is the daughter of the village chief, is the only one I noticed with these scars. They tell me the marshal at Kodiak has sort of deputized the chief here and has sent the chief a gold braided hat with "chief of Kanatak Indian Tribe" on it. They say the chief on one occasion arrested a native who got careless with his rifle around the village and took him to the marshal.

Dancing here is quite a bit behind the times, about the same as at Bethel I would judge eight years ago. Fast Swede waltzes and accordion pieces and polkas with rather monotonous airs are most in demand. One record that amused me to dance to was an instrumental version of "Old Black Joe." They seem to like the even more monotonous guitar, accordion and mouth-organ playing of native performers. My fine selection of popular dance records, some of them extremely popular at Bethel, don't make any kind of a hit here. That is, except with the two native girls who are the only ones clever enough to follow a modern fox trot.

Mining in this section is practically nil. There is a very little prospecting for placer gold somewhere around Ugashik Lake but that is all. It seems the trappers regard prospecting as a kind of vacation trip.

—PAUL ESTLE

Ask Adventure



For free information and services you can't get elsewhere

Archery

A FIFTY-POUND bow will kill any animal on the American continent. A hundred-pound bow will penetrate the hide of any animal except a rhinoceros or a chronic book-borrower.

Request:—"A perfectly good (otherwise) friend of mine presented me with a six-foot lemon wood stave with the instruction to 'go to it'. So here I am passing the buck.

1. What is the nomenclature of the bow?

2. How does one lay out the stave before working it down?

3. How is the weight or pull predetermined? I'd like to make it a little stronger than the average men's target bow.

4. What care does a bow need after it is made?

5. What type of arrows do you recommend for small game, rabbits, etc.? How much of a bow and what type of arrow will stop coyotes or deer?

6. Incidentally, I shoot left handed; that is, I draw the string with my left hand. I'm ordinarily right handed, with pen, rifle, pistol, etc.—yes, and typewriter, too!"

—LEE C. SHEA, San Francisco, California

Reply, by Mr. Earl B. Powell:—1. The bow consists of a back, a belly, two arms or limbs, two horns, a grip or handle, a string, a keeper (string that keeps

the bow string from slipping down the bow). Also there is a groove in the horns which is known as the nock. It is also the custom to refer to the whole horn tip of the bow as the nock. Nock is also the term applied to the notch cut in the end of the arrow to receive the string.

2. If you are going to make your own bows and arrows, I would advise you to buy a good book, as it is impossible to tell you this in a letter. There is "Archery" by Dr. Elmer, or "Bows and Arrows" by James Duff. Also there is "Hunting with the Bow and Arrow" by Saxton Pope. If you will write to *Hunter-Trader-Trapper*, a magazine published at Columbus, Ohio, and get the two articles published in 1927 entitled "How To Make A Good Bow" (of which I am the author) you will find the steps of making a bow described and detailed with drawings to accompany.

3. This is done by drawing the bow back with a spring scale to the length of arrow used. For example, if a bow draws 45 lbs. at the length of a 28 inch arrow it is a 45 lb. bow, and so on. The Chinese were the first people known to have used this system of determining the actual strength of a bow.

4. The main points are to never leave it strung up after using; hang it up instead of standing up; keep in a cool, dry and dark place; never snap it without an arrow on the string; never overdraw—draw it beyond the length of the arrow used; learn to string it properly. It is also well to keep it lightly oiled and in a case of some kind.

5. For birds and other small game—blunt headed arrows with heavy feathers; for squirrels,'coons, etc., light broadheads; for deer and coyote, a heavier sized broadheaded arrow is better. A 50 lb. bow will kill any animal on the American continent. Art Young says a 40 lb., and he may be right at that. Personally, I have killed three alligators ranging from over 7 ft. long to 12 ft. 11 in., and did it with a 70 lb. Osage orange bow. I believe that a 100 lb. bow will penetrate the hide of any animal except a rhinoceros or a chronic book-borrower. These last two are very thick skinned.

6. I would advise you to learn to shoot right handed as you are naturally that way. If you were naturally left handed I would advise keeping it up.

Gold

STRANGE coins before the mint came to California.

Request:—"Can you tell me where I can find out the value of a gold half dollar of 1853?"

—M. B. EDWARDS, Manhasset, Long Island

Reply, by Mr. Howland Wood:—The Government struck no gold half dollars. Your piece may or may not be a charm, but this can not be ascertained without seeing it. The history of these pieces is something like this: In the gold mining days, in California, bankers, assayers and others issued their own gold money (gold dust naturally being plentiful), as the Federal Government was unable to supply sufficient coins to meet the demand. But this was not the best medium for exchange. About 1853, these private issues began to stop, and in that year, the Government established a mint in San Francisco.

Most of the pieces were of 2½, 5, 10 and 50 dollar denominations. There were a few one dollar gold pieces made that were undoubtedly meant for use; 25 and 50 cent gold pieces were made but were in all likelihood simply souvenirs and not currency. Since then, 25, 50 cents, and one dollar gold pieces have been made for souvenirs and charms. In recent years the Government has tried to put a stop to the manufacture of these, so that the later pieces may have simply "¼" or "½" without the word dollar. Your piece has only a nominal value, something like fifty to seventy-five cents.

Abyssinia

WHERE Ras Tafari, King of Kings and Lion of Judah, rules an unconquered kingdom, and regards Europeans as colored barbarians compared with his own race, which was Christian when France and England were pagan wilds. He likes Americans. But he has no jobs to offer.

Request:—"A few questions, if you don't mind, on Abyssinia. The recent articles on the coronation of the Emperor have aroused my curiosity and have caused the soles of my feet to itch again.

1. I should like to know something of the temperament of the people, their customs, religion, and their reaction to white men, especially to Americans?

2. Climate, health conditions, which I believe are better than West Africa?

3. Does the Abyssinian government have any diplomatic dealings with the United States, any consular service or an embassy in Washington? Where?

4. Would there be any chance, in your opinion, of an unskilled person making any connections there?

5. And last, a good book on the subject?"

—WILLIAM M. GRIER, Elizabeth, New Jersey

Reply, by Capt. R. W. van Raven de Sturler:—1. The Abyssinian proper is not a negro, though there are, of course, many of mixed blood. He forms about one-third the entire population and inhabits the kingdoms of Tigre, Amgara and Gojam in the north and Shoa in Central Abyssinia. The other inhabitants consist of Gallas in the south and southwest; negro and negroid races, generally referred to as Shankala, on the western frontiers; Danakil, Issa and Somali in the east and Ogaden in the southeast.

There is also a curious race of Jews, named Falasha, who live north of Lake Tsana and who, up to a short time ago, were unaware of the fact that millions of their co-religionists had spread all over the globe.

Finally there are Gourage, southeast of Addis Abeba, the capital.

Coming back to the Abyssinians proper, it may be said that they are a fine type of men, of middle height, well built and from olive to brown in complexion; I believe all have (at least all those I have met) dark brown eyes and soft, black, fine hair (not of the negro or "kinky" type) worn in pompadour fashion.

In his own country (never having been subjugated or ruled by the white race) he is the top dog. The white—or as they call him, the "red"—man is merely an immigrant who thus does not find himself considered as a member of the ruling race, and, of course, does not like this. The Abyssinian is inherently suspicious of the Frangi (European or white), *not* the American, whom he seems to prefer as against the British, French and Italians.

He desires to continue living in the *status quo* and is not over anxious to acquire modern civilization, thinks himself equal to the white man, and the latter must carry this fact in mind in any transactions with Abyssinians.

THEIR military success against Italy by the victory of Adowa—the fact, that they have embraced and retained one of the earliest Christian religions at a time when Europe was still laboring under pagan rulers, have, no doubt, added to their feeling of self-importance, which, by the way, does not facilitate mutual relations between the white man and the Abyssinian.

2. The climate on the plateau (8000 to 14000 feet) is even better than California (warm during the day and decidedly cool at night), the lower altitudes approach tropical conditions and their attendant diseases: dysentery, enteric fevers, etc.

3. The U. S. maintains a legation at Addis Abeba, but there is no Abyssinian representative in Washington.

4. I am quite certain that such is not possible.

5. "The Last of Free Africa" by Gordon MacCreagh, The Century Co., New York.

Schooner

FOR the coasting trade a vessel must be at least 75% American-owned.

Request:—"I am planning to buy a small two-masted schooner of about 25 to 40 tons and sail her down to the Society Islands.

1. I am not an American citizen. Would that hinder me from buying or sailing her away and would I be required to have a license of any kind? I am a fair navigator but have no license.

2. If not I would like to get a confiscated rum schooner off the Government, so I wish you would give me some idea how to locate any ships that are to be sold."

—GORDON J. CAMPBELL, New Orleans, Louisiana

Reply, by Lieut. Harry E. Rieseberg:—In answer to your request for information I might advise you that the new law of the U. S. Navigation Bureau states that for the coasting trade and trade in the American merchant marine service an owner must be an American and if more than one owner then 75% of same must be Americans. See *Revised statutes 4144.*

It will also be necessary for you to secure a license to operate such a vessel; this may be had by applying to the nearest collector of customs (in your case New Orleans).

2. As to locating vessels which you might care to purchase, I would suggest that you purchase copies of the *Rudder, Marine Review, Yachting, Motor Boating,* or other maritime and nautical magazines, from any good newsstand and glance over the classified ads in same, where you will find many bargains.

Mercury

DESCRIPTION of a one-man mine in Nevada as a pattern for a two-man mine in Honduras.

Request:—"I am writing you in quest of information concerning the best methods of mining mercury. The diggings we have located is in Honduras. What equipment would be necessary to refine it and in what quantities could two men handle it to make it a paying proposition?

The place we know of has plenty of mercury confined in a porous rock formation. Could two men refine enough to make it a paying thing after all the export and import tariffs were taken from it?"

—GARY O. BELL, Roanoke, Indiana.

Reply, by Mr. Victor Shaw:—In reply to your question as to whether two men could "mine and refine enough quicksilver to make a paying proposition," I am going to describe a *one-man* quicksilver mine which produces 5 flasks per month. The property is in the White Mts. above Fish Lake Valley, about 60 miles west of Tonopah, Nevada. The man doing the work on the mine was grubstaked under a three-way-split—so he gets but ⅓ the gross of it. In addition, the claims had been located previously and had to be purchased on a compromise basis with a 25% royalty to be paid from the gross income from subsequent production. I mention this to give you the handicap condition. This quicksilver miner had one helper during early development and to build surface improvements, including the refinery. When this work was finished, the helper was let go and the mine operated upon a strictly one-man basis.

The ore in this mine occurs in thin fissures, or seams, often associated with loose sands and at times filtering into country rock along the seams. The deposit is opened by gophering, following the ore at all stages. Such openings have been made just large enough to let the worker pass in and out; no more. He gouges seams and pockets (called "chloriding") using a "chloride-stick", or a "poke-bar" as an implement of extraction. It is a four-foot bar of ⅞" drill steel, with each end sharpened and

tempered and bent to an angle of 45°, these ends being 3 to 6 inches from each end.

Blasting is done only as a last resort, since drilling holes takes too much time. Also, timbering is avoided whenever possible. Time is an important factor in this one-man work, where strict economy must be practised to make it pay.

Ore is chlorided clean, on canvas, and sacked on the spot to prevent dilution with waste rock. It is then packed out by hand; then loaded on a wheelbarrow and taken to a box sled on steel runners; which is dragged by a jennyburro 1000 ft. downhill to the retort.

THIS man mines an average of 1000 lbs. a day, which is 2 retort charges. Waste removed while mining is at a ratio of about 5 to 1, though this sometimes reaches as high as 10 to 1. The calcine is drawn twice daily from the retort. Besides this mining work, the miner cuts and hauls with his jenny 1 to 3 cords of wood for the retort fuel; he cooks his own meals and cares for the burro. Wood has to be cut each day, since to obtain maximum economy of fuel it is necessary to keep the retort fired continuously.

Seems to be some stunt, what? But, he divides his time thus:

6:30 A.M.—draw calcine and charge retort—followed by clean-up of quick and working of the soot. During the day while mining and transporting ore, fire up at intervals as needed.

4:30 P.M.—draw calcine again and recharge, afterward keeping hot fire till 9 or 10 P.M. or bedtime. Fire is then banked and the cooking is completed during night, by aid of heat stored in firebox lining.

Generally, 1 to 3 trips a day with burro load keeps the 2 daily retort charges going.

Mercury recovered: close to 2½% of charge tonnage, or 50 lbs. of quick per ton. The man has operated four months in this manner and in that time produced 35 flasks which sold for a gross of about $4000, of which $1000 was applied on payment for the property.

The retort is of the "D" type, capacity of 500 lbs.

UNDER the present scheme of operation, 40 lbs. of quick per day produced, will yield the three partners close to $30 each in net profit. They hope to discover higher grade ore later that may yield larger profits—or perhaps a far larger area of low grade stuff that will permit a sale to a company financially able to work on a big-tonnage basis to cut operating costs.

The ore in this mine is cinnabar, the red sulphide of mercury. The quick is mostly extracted by roasting in the retort condensers, and by working over the "soot" which also contains a percentage of quick. The retort is an open air affair, since the climate in that part of Nevada is very dry.

For the authenticity of this account, I refer you to Mr. Homar L. Johnson, on the staff of the *Engineering & Mining Journal*, from whose article in the July 7, '28 issue of that publication the facts above were compiled.

There are two types of retort which may be used by a small outfit for producing salable mercury on the ground at the mine. These are: "D" retorts, so-called because of resemblance to that letter, are made of cast iron and are placed with the straight side lying horizontally. The other type is the Johnson-McKay tubes, or pipe retorts, also cast iron and usually about 12" in diameter and of varying lengths.

In general, the "D" retort is the more substantial and will last longer, with less hazard of mercurial poisoning to the operator. But its initial cost is higher; it is more expensive to install; and many operators think it requires more fuel than the other per unit of ore treated.

With this retort it is customary to provide a length and diameter for a capacity of from 400 to as high as 1000 lbs. per charge.

Johnson-McKay tubes are commonly installed in sets of 6 to 12, having a capacity of 1000 to 3000 lbs. per charge. Quantity in both cases varying with weight of ore, skill in spreading charge, duration of retorting period, and extent to which it is advisable to fill the retort which depends on character and density of the ore.

Preliminary crushing is needed only when lumps are too big to charge in tubes.

Mexico

GAME abounds, and the climate is fine, but you risk the confiscation of your arms and baggage if you violate a hunting restriction. Much of the territory along the Border is forbidden to American sportsmen.

Request:—"1. What time does the hunting season open in Old Mexico? What is the cost of a license, and can I obtain all the necessary papers at the port of entry and not be detained several days waiting to hear from Washington?

2. Where must I go to obtain deer and possibly a bear? Can I carry my own rifle across?"

—W. R. MARTIN, Loraine, Texas

Reply, by Mr. J. W. Whiteaker:—1. The hunting season in Mexico is somewhat on the same order as that of Texas. An unexpected decree from the Mexican government has placed an embargo on hunters from the U. S. in certain of the Border states which are Coahuila and part of Nueve Leon. Some of the best hunting grounds are in these states.

The hunting license costs $15 per year or season. There are permits issued for a day at $1.50 each, but it is hardly worth while to bother with one of these. You can get your license at the Custom House and also a copy of the game laws. The Mexicans are getting rather strict about the hunting and fishing in their country in the past few years. The penalties for violation of these laws are from 50 to 100 pesos or 15 days in prison, which will be imposed by the Dept. of Agriculture or its general agencies, or

by the municipal president of the locality acting in lieu thereof.

In cases where penalties are imposed, all animals, whether dead or alive, and all arms and other hunting equipment which may be in the possession of the violators of these laws, will be confiscated.

You will have to have passport, vaccination certificate, a permit to carry arms across the Border, a duty on your ammunition, hunting license, a visitor's license for your car.

The hunting season opens about the 15th of November for some of the game in Mexico. The season is open for other game the entire year.

Your passport can be obtained through your District Clerk—cost $10, and then to have it visaed by the Mexican consul at the port of entry $10 more. Your hunting license, car registration, duty, and permit to take your rifle across at the Custom House in Mexico.

There is too much game in Texas along the border of Mexico or in some other section of the country to go into Mexico hunting unless a person just wants to say that he has been hunting in Mexico.

2. Game abounds in the Sierra Madre region. Bear, panther, lynx, civet and wild cat, mountain lion, jaguar, gray timber wolf, red and silver fox, deer, rabbits, coyotes, etc. The best time for hunting is in November and December, for then the animals are at their best, as well as the weather.

You would have to go from 150 to 200 miles into the interior of Mexico to get out of the embargo zone of the Border towns of the above states. Tamaulipas below Monterey, Chihuahua, and Sonora State in the vicinity of Hermosilla are all good game countries.

Indian

SOME of the original American nations in the vicinity of New York City.

Request:—"To which of the two sub-tribes of the Delaware—the Unami or Munsee—did the New York group Waoranec belong, and would you please give me a list of the local groups of all three sub-tribes?

Next, what were the other sub-tribes of the Mahican besides the Wappinger Confederacy? Did the Pequots and Mohegans belong to the Mahican, and were the two above tribes, Pequot and Mohegan, once one tribe under one chief?

What tribes composed the Wampanoag or Pokanoket Confederacy? Did the Nauset, Patuxet, Gay Head Indians and Martha's Vineyard Indians belong to this Confederacy?

Lastly, if it does not take too much of your time, would you please suggest some good references on these subjects?"—JAMES VAVRA, Chicago, Illinois

Reply, by Mr. Arthur Woodward:—The local group of the Waoranec of the Delaware to which you refer belonged to the Unami subdivision.

The Munsi division was divided into the Waranawonkong, Mamekoting, Wawarsink and Catskill, with probably some smaller bands which I do not know. Among the Unalachtigo divisions in Pennsylvania were probably the Neshamini, Shackamaxon, Passayonk, Ohkahoki and Nantuxets. There were numerous other smaller bands such as the Kahansuk, Konekotay, Eriwonec, etc., which may have belonged to one division or the other, but I must confess I can not state to which division they owed allegiance. A lot of water has run under the bridge since then. In addition to the names of bands, don't forget there were many, many town and camp sites which bore the Delaware names, and it may be that some of these town sites were the homes of bands belonging to one outfit or the other.

The reason I have classified the Waoranec with the Unami instead of with the Munsi is because of Bolton's classification, which has been made since Ruttenber made his.

THE remainder of the Unami group as far as I know are as follows: Navasink, Raritan, Aquacanonck, Haverstraw, Tappan, Hackensack and Reckgawawanc.

The Mahican tribe with the Wappinger Confederacy as its sub-tribe and local groups consisted principally of the Weckquaesgeek, Sintsink, Kitchawank, Nochpeem, Tankiteke, Siwanoy and Wappinger.

The Pequots and the Mohegans did not belong to the Mahican. That is as far as our historic data goes; it is not known that the Mohegan and the Hudson River bands of the Mahican ever affiliated in any political way. In early times the Pequot and Mohegan were as one tribe and fought as one people. Yes, originally the Pequot and the Mohegan were under one chief, or head man, Sassacus. This was when the whites first landed.

The Wampanoags laid claim to the country east of Narragansett Bay and Pawtucket River to the Atlantic Coast, including the islands of Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and at one time Rhode Island, but the latter was taken away from them by the Narragansetts. The Nauset belonged to the group, although in a measure they were independent. The Gayhead people were members of the Wampanoag tribe, Gayhead being a village site.

The principal village of the Wampanoags was Pokanoket, which, being the home of the chief, sometimes causes the group of local Wampanoag bands to be known as the Pokanoket Confederacy. After King Philip's War (1675-77) the Wampanoag and Narragansett were practically exterminated and the survivors dispersed among many of the interior tribes.

About the best single reference I can give you for any of these tribal groupings is the "Handbook of the American Indian", 2 volumes, which is Bulletin 30, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D. C., now obtainable only in second hand book shops. "New York City in Indian Possession" gives local sub-tribes and groups of the Delaware and their territories in New York and New Jersey; it is a very handy little book.

Tank Corps

THE Somme Offensive of 1918 witnessed our first caterpillars in action.

Request:—"Have heard so many conflicting accounts of that little and vaguely known branch of the Service during the World War, namely the Tank Corps, that I would request some information regarding the following:

1. Were any other units organized previous to the 301st Battalion, Heavy Tanks, which were established Feb. 22nd, 1918, at Camp Meade, Md., as the Heavy Motor Section, 65th Engineers, and later reorganized at Worgret, Wareham, England? If so, what outfit, when and where?

2. Above mentioned battalion claims to have been the only heavies to see action. Is this so, and what were their accredited engagements?

3. The personnel of the 301st Heavy Battalion wore an insignia different from the tricolored triangle of the other units of that branch, a band of red and yellow about each shoulder strap. Was this an authorized distinction and, if so, why?

4. How many battalions of both heavy and light tanks were there overseas? At home?

5. How many battalions of light tanks were in actual combat?

6. Are there any authentic books or pamphlets published recounting the history of this branch of the Service in the United States Army? If so, where may they be obtained?"

—WILLIAM H. FRAZE, Brackenridge, Pennsylvania

Reply, by Capt. Glen R. Townsend:—My friend, Lieutenant Robert J. Icks (Inf. Res. Tanks), of Stevens Point, Wis., who has collected one of the best private libraries on tanks and is a recognized authority on tank history, has furnished me with the information on which the following reply to your inquiry is based.

1. The Tank Service Detachment of two companies and the 1st battalion, 65th Engineers became the 1st Tank Center and the 1st Heavy Tank battalion, respectively. Later they were reorganized as the 326th battalion and the 41st battalion and then as the 344th and 301st battalions. This reorganization probably took place simultaneously, in which case the claim to being first would be a divided one.

2. Yes, the 301st was the only heavy tank battalion to see action. Their accredited engagements are Le Cateau, Sept. 29; Brancourt, Oct. 8; The Selle, Oct. 17 and Marmot Forest, Oct. 23. These are all included in the Somme Offensive of 1918.

3. The different insignia worn by members of the 301st was, according to information furnished Lieutenant Icks by an English army officer who served with them, the colors of the British tank battalion with which they were brigaded. I do not think this insignia was ever authorized by the War Department, but was worn under local authority.

4. Nine battalions of tanks, and two repair and salvage companies, reached England and France. I do not have figures showing the number of units in America.

5. Two battalions of light tanks, the 344th and 345th saw actual battle service.

6. Lieutenant Icks informs me he has not been able to obtain any complete books or pamphlets covering the history of American tanks in the War and I know of none. "Life in a Tank" by Haigh is an account of personal experiences which throws considerable light on the subject. General works on tanks which devote some space to American tanks are "The Tank Corps" by Ellis; "Tanks in the Great War" by Fuller and "Australian Victories in France 1918" by General Monash. These can be obtained through the book department of the United States Infantry Association, Infantry Building, Washington, D. C., and are to be found in most good libraries. The Tank School at Fort George Meade, Maryland, may be able to furnish you with other references.

Spanish Moss

A BACKWOODS product of the old South. In reply to the question as to how to protect gathered moss from thieves Mr. Liebe recommends a traditional swamp defense—birdshot in the first barrel of your gun and, just in case the thief doesn't halt, buckshot in the second.

Request:—"1. Can you give me any information as to the gathering of Spanish moss in the South?

2. Is it collected commercially wherever it grows?

3. How is it collected?

4. What type of people live in the swamps in which it grows?

5. What suggestion would you have to protect myself from thieves stealing my gathered moss?"

—FRANK WILDER, Orange, New Jersey

Reply, by Mr. Hapsburg Liebe:—I am glad to tell you all I am able concerning Spanish moss as a commercial proposition, although I do not know a very great deal about it.

There is no reason why ambitious folks shouldn't work in this, but it is just the sort of thing that poor whites and negroes take up. There is rarely any job of this kind that is worth while. Now to your specific questions:

1. Spanish moss abounds in the southern halves of Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina, and in Florida. And in Louisiana, of course.

2. I don't believe that it is collected commercially wherever it grows. Probably it is collected only here and there. The "bark" is usually scalded off it, leaving hairlike fiber that is used as "hair" for stuffing cushions, especially automobile seat cushions.

3. It is collected by means of hooks on long poles, and ladders.

4. Concerning the type of people living around the swamps where it grows, these would likely be

poor white people and negroes. But moss grows in places that are not especially swampy, though not much on very high land.

5. Protection from thieves stealing gathered moss? That would be up to you, altogether. If it were I, I think I'd have small shot in one barrel of my gun and buckshot in the other. I'd fire the small shot first, and if the thief or thieves returned the fire I'd let 'em have the buckshot. This is a time honored plan down here, with petty thieves. It works pretty well as a general thing.

Photo

ON THE emergency use of sea water for washing films.

Request:—"1. Can sea water be used for washing films and prints?

2. Can films be developed at higher temperature than ordinarily employed?"

—R. L. HENDERSON, Huntington Park, California

Reply, by Mr. Paul L. Anderson:—1. You can use sea water for washing films and prints provided you give them a thorough rinsing in fresh water afterward. It is not advised for developing, though I have heard of it being used for that purpose.

2. Plates and films can be developed at much higher temperatures than 65° F., provided you give them five minutes, before developing, in a 5% solution of formaldehyde. Amidol is advised for developing, since this works without alkali, and so does not soften the film. But the formaldehyde bath will change the development time very decidedly from that given in the books and instruction sheets, so experiment beforehand. The Eastman Kodak Co. get out a pamphlet on Tropical Development, which they will send you on request, and which should help you.

Gaucho

THIS strange variety of South American plainsman is not always a cowboy—but he is always a tough *hombre*.

Request:—"1. Are all cowherds in S. A. called *gauchos?*

2. Whence the name? Is it Spanish or Indian?

3. What sort of saddle is used and is double or single rig used for cinching?

4. What sort of rope do they use and what method of affixing the near end?

5. Horses or ponies?

6. Customs?

7. Clothing?

8. Food?

9. What chance for employment for American cowboys?"

—EDWIN G. DWIGHT, Jamaica, Long Island

Reply, by Mr. Edgar Young:—The *gauchos* (pronounced Gow-oó-chohs) of Argentine, Uruguay and Paraguay and the *gauchos* (pronounced Gow-oo-shos) of Brazil are a similar class of men, living on the pampas and making their living usually with cattle herding. The name, strictly speaking, does not mean cowboy. The famous Argentine cowboy, T. S. Tszchiffley, who rode from Argentine to New York, and myself who walked the trip the other direction, differ on the derivation of the word *gaucho*. He claims it is of Guarani Indian derivation and means maverick or *stray*. I contend it is of Moorish derivation and means, literally, *cowherd*. I offered the explanation to Friend Tszchiffley that I found the word in old Spanish literature before the conquest of South America and before the Spaniards had thrown off the Moorish yoke, but at last accounts he still held to his theory. We may both be right. The word might have got into the Guarani language from lone Moors who came over with the first settlers and then got back into the Argentine language in that manner.

THE word as used in Argentine has never meant cowboy, strictly speaking, but means something like our word "squatter" or "settler." There is another word in Brazil for the settler in the wooded areas, the very expressive title *caboclo*. The settler on the plains is a *gaucho* and the settler in the huge wooded area of southern Brazil is a *caboclo*, and they pronounce the word in Portuguese a bit different to the Spanish way.

Both the *gauchos* of the Spanish republics and of Brazil, which is a Portuguese speaking country, use to a great extent the customs of the Moors. The saddles, bridles, horses, even the clothing they wear, are derived from the Moors. The *gaucho* makes his pants out of a poncho by twisting it about his legs and bringing it up under his belt, but when he is through it is the baggy bloomer-like pants of the Moorish horseman. The saddle is Moorish and ornamented in that fashion. Also the moral code of the *gaucho* is Moorish. He fights with a knife that is Moorish in design. But his *bolas*, stirrups, and much of his personal appearance are Guarani.

It is a 50-50 break between Guarani, who knew no horses and ran his game down on foot and roped them with *bolas*, or *boleadores*, as they are more correctly called, and the desert riding Moor who never walked when he could ride and considered every other man's woman his own.

Not all cowboys of S. A. are called *gauchos* and not all cowboys of even the country where *gauchos* are plentiful are called *gauchos*. Most, *but not all*, *gauchos* are cowboys. Vice-versa, not all cowboys of even Argentine are *gauchos*. They are men of the ranges and they are almost always able to handle cattle, horses and ostriches.

There are cowboys of northern and Amazonian Brazil who do their stuff with leather suits for themselves and horses in the thorn woods and are as unlike their southern brothers as day from night. Also the *vaqueros* of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and a portion of Bolivia are much different. In one small portion of Bolivia there are real

gauchos, and I forgot to say that southern Chile is *muy gaucho*, with some of the best and bravest riders in the whole world among them.

NOW for direct answers to your questions:

1. Not all.

2. I contend the name is Moorish, being derived from the old Moorish word *gnacho*, meaning cowherd. Mr. T. S. Tszchiffley, a real expert on *gauchos*, says it is Guarani. He was born in Argentine and spent his life on the ranges and should know, but I don't believe he does in this case. He also says he thinks I don't know what I am talking about. So he shall have his say along with mine.

3. A saddle composed of two rolls of straw covered with rawhide and strapped together with a big wooden Moorish front and rear is used. They are single or double rigged, depending on personal preference and locality.

4. Rawhide, small, plaited, and quite long. Most prefer a sixty foot rope. It is affixed to the rear of the saddle and the horse whirls tail-to when the animal is roped. Much hauling is done with a rope in similar fashion for light loads.

5. The horse of the southern pampas is of Moorish blood with certain differences due to locality and climate. No better horse is found in the whole world. They are about the size of our own Western cowhorses.

6. The real *gaucho* on the pampas lives in a mud hut covered with mud over a layer of reeds. He eats meat without bread, drinks *maté*, sleeps on his saddle blankets and uses his saddle for a pillow. He can hurl his *bolas* better than a hundred yards with fair accuracy and is the perfect horseman, riding the worst of horses with almost incredible insouciance. His woman is almost as wild a character as he himself. She smokes cigars while he smokes cigarets, wears rawhide boots with the hair on, made of a mare's skin stripped from the lower leg of the animal and put on to form to her leg and foot while warm. They love music and dancing, liquor, racing, fighting, and all in all are not a bad sort.

7. The *gaucho* men, speaking for Argentine, where they are most numerous, wear a baggy shirt, pants made of a poncho or shawl by two simple twists of the wrist, another shawl for a coat, and *potro* boots made of the skin of a mare stripped from the legs and pulled on to shape while they dry. The men take the hair off for their boots and the women leave it on. The children usually wear puma skin buskins.

8. Meat and *maté* are the two main foods. They eat one and drink the other.

9. Little, if any. The native is as good as or better than his North American brother, especially with local gear and methods.

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A Complete list of the "Ask Adventure" experts appears in the issue of the fifteenth of each month

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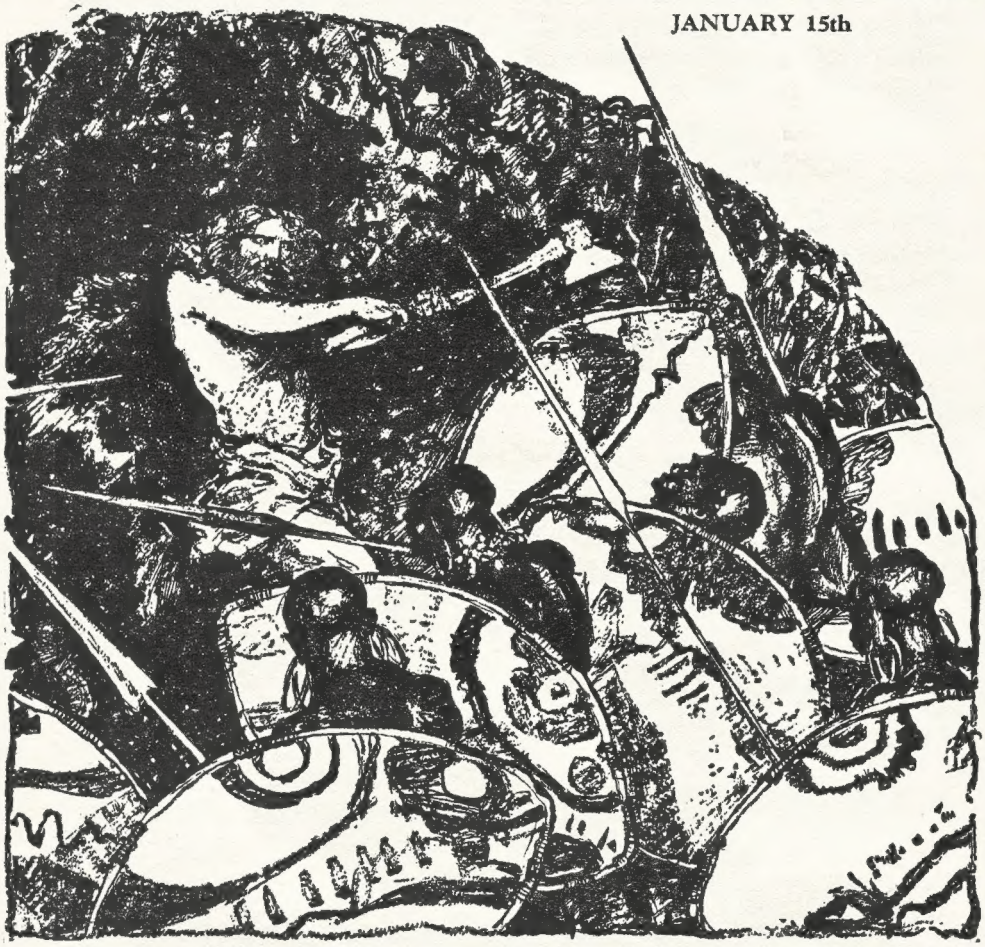

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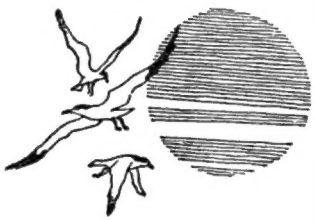

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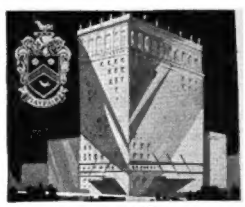

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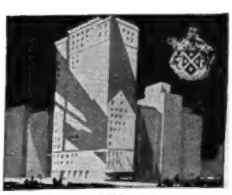

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